

REPORT

OF THE

FOURTH MEETING

OF THE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN

AND OTHER

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES,

HELD IN NEW YORK, N. Y., OCTOBER 19, 20, 21, 1870,

TOGETHER WITH THE

CONFERENCE SERMON,

THE

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE CONFERENCE,

AND A

LIST OF THE ACCREDITED DELEGATES.

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# THE SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ON THE EVENING BEFORE  
THE FORMAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE.

BY REV. WILLIAM G. ELIOT, D. D.

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“The Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”—GAL. v. 1.

MY subject this evening may be briefly expressed: CHRIST AND LIBERTY: The Gospel and the freedom of the Gospel; and the text which will chiefly guide me is from the fifth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, the first verse: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

Steadfast in freedom, and in the freedom which Christ gives. Not wavering. Not driven to and fro by every wind of doctrine. Not using our liberty as if it were exemption from law, but rather as the free submission to the law of God.

We are glad of that word *stand* fast. It is always a great word with the freedom-loving Apostle; as when he speaks to those who are armed with all the weapons of spiritual warfare,—with the sword of the spirit, and the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, that they may fight against the powers of darkness and sin,—he exhorts them, having done all, to stand. Words of sober, thoughtful Christian enthusiasm, which we, in this freedom-loving age, so much need to consider and obey.

What was the liberty of which he spoke? What was the bondage from which we are delivered?

It was the bondage of rituals and forms and ceremonies; of superstition and degrading fear; of human authority and traditional faith and priestly dominion. It was the liberty of spiritual life. The liberty of love which casteth out fear. The liberty of individual thought and action, responsible to God alone. That is the bondage from which we have escaped. That is the glorious liberty of the sons of God, which is brought to us by the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is an excellent heritage which we have received from our fathers, unimpaired, as it came from the great Giver, the inestimable value of which we but imperfectly discern. As with the air we breathe, the preciousness of which we do not know until we come to some pestilential region where disease and weakness enter with every breath,— we do not know the comfort and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost which our Christ-given freedom confers, until we are brought to witness the blighting influence of a corrupt and corrupting ecclesiasticism, which binds heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lays them on men's shoulders, and uses the fear of hell as the hangman's whip, and converts God's infinite love into vindictive hatred, and builds inquisitions for prevention of free thought, and prisons for its punishment.

It is our heritage, and men never know the value of what they inherit, as of that for which they have toiled and suffered. They do not know its value,

and it is equally true that they seldom know its rightful use. They waste it, or pamper themselves with it, or make it a matter of boasting and pride; and escaping from the hardship which alone secures vigor and strength, they become imbecile and insignificant, and that which was conferred as a benediction is changed into a curse.

Freedom is opportunity. It is not so much an absolute good as the opportunity of obtaining what is good. It is deliverance from evil, but itself becomes evil when wrongly used. The chains fall from the emancipated slave, and he rises up a man; but until he has learned to put restraint upon himself, and subject himself to laws more strict and searching than the severest tyranny ever imposed, his manhood needs to be under tutelage as if he were a child. Only when he has learned the stricter rule of manliness, and has substituted voluntary service for enforced obedience, has he fully learned what the gift of freedom means. In like manner spiritual freedom is opportunity of self-direction and self-control under the law of God, and only when wisely used to this end can it insure spiritual growth. It is therefore the strictest and holiest law, the most exacting and impossible of evasion. When seeking to bring us under the severest code of all, the Apostle says, "So speak ye and so do as those who shall be judged by the law of liberty."

The tendency is always to extremes. In the escape from bondage we are always in danger of becoming lawless, and with what is evil too often

throw away the good. Thus the gospel frees us from the bondage of forms and rituals. I will have mercy and not sacrifice. The Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath. First, make clean the inside of the cup and platter, that the outside may be clean also.

It is wonderful what a hold ritualism can obtain over the human mind, and how it gradually takes the place of religion itself. In proof of this we need not go back to the times of Jewish tradition when Jesus spoke, for evidences enough are left at the present day. There are yet found Christian churches where times and seasons, fasts and festivals, forms and ceremonies, are made to bury practical religion out of sight, and those who dare to disregard them, and appeal to the spirit against the letter, are counted no better than infidels. But from all such beggarly elements Christ frees us, and declares that in themselves they are worthless, and, if regarded only for themselves, pernicious. Two outward forms alone are left, with his sanction, both symbolic, — Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and even of these, simple and expressive as they are, it is contended that we can find no clear and absolute command for their perpetuity. After reducing the ritual of religion to its lowest point, establishing a minimum of forms below which it would seem that nothing remains, the manner of their observance, and their observance itself, are left to the individual conscience and reason of the believer. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth



the day, regardeth it to the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." The priesthood, the Sabbath, the modes of public worship, and everything that belongs to church establishment, whether Catholic or Protestant, depend for their continuance, not on the express command of Christ and his Apostles, but upon their example and the early usage of the church, and the practical ends to be obtained. The essential spirit of our religion and the full sanctity of Christian life can be retained, and have been retained, when all external aids and expressions have been rejected. Of this the Society of Friends has given proof.

But although "all things are thus lawful, all things are not expedient." Common-sense and experience and the teaching of history combine to place restraint upon this liberty, and the danger of rejecting all forms, because they are subordinate to the substance, is proved just as often as the experiment is tried. The Friends discarded the Christian usages, but the necessity of the case compelled them, unawares, to adopt or grow into others of their own; and by their peculiar language and dress, and social and religious customs, they became, even in their attempt at perfect spirituality, formalists above the rest; and in modern times, wherever they have put off their conventionalities, and fallen into the world's ways, they have uniformly and rapidly been absorbed into other churches, so that, as a denomination, they are in danger of passing away. So indispensable is it, practically speaking, to have some outward help,

some visible landmarks, some form of expression, by which the faith that is in us can be made known and cherished.

To some extent, and always with similar result, we Unitarians have tried the experiment, and by neglect of the few remaining forms of Christian organization many of our churches have been enfeebled, and not a few of them closed. Wherever we have sought to reduce the ritual of Christianity below that which Christ and his Apostles felt incumbent upon themselves, we have dwindled and languished. I believe that reason and the just exercise of Christian liberty would bring us back, not to superstitious regard of forms, but to their careful observance as needful helps and guides. The baptism of the young, by which they are brought, through outward form, into the visible Christian fold, and made to feel that from the first they are consecrated to God and his service; their confirmation, at suitable age and after fitting instruction in the Christian faith, by which they are placed in just relation to Christ's church, before the world has spoiled and corrupted them; and the more deliberate and mature confession of faith in Christ which the communion service implies; these things, considered as means to a spiritual end, should be more carefully regarded, and placed among our positive duties, under the law of liberty. They are the school-master to bring us to Christ; and we might as well close our schools by saying that education, not schools, is what we want, as to discard religious instrumentalities in the church and conference and



prayer-meeting, and at the altar, because religion is what we desire. In other things practical men do not discard the use of means in seeking for the end. But in religion, practical good sense is set aside. If we neglect the means of grace, our spiritual interests must suffer, and we have no right to be surprised when our churches fade, and our children stray from us, and our young men leave the places of their elders vacant. It is only the natural result of the abuse of spiritual freedom which we have not had the grace and wisdom rightly to use.

In like manner the gospel frees us from superstitious fears. We learn from it to respect our human nature, and to look up to God as our Father and Friend. We feel sure that both in time and eternity he chastens us as a father chastens his children, and that, when we suffer for our sins, the just and rightful retribution is administered and restrained by parental love. We do not believe in the total depravity of the worst man that ever lived; nor that any individual whom God has ever created can become absolutely and forever hateful to him. The relation between us and God is that of children and parent; and, however much perverted by our sins, can never be absolutely destroyed. The time will never come to any human soul when it may not, if it will, look up to the Almighty God with the prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven." Man was created in the image of God, and it is like blasphemy against God himself to speak of man as some of the creeds of Christendom have ventured to do. One great mission of our

Unitarian churches has been, and yet is, to vindicate the goodness of God by freeing man from the theological contempt and the practical self-contempt into which by false doctrine he has been thrown. From superstitious fears, of whatever kind, founded upon the supposed hostility of God to us, and the consequent power of the Prince of Darkness over our souls, we have been most happily set free.

But have we not gone a step too far? Both in our preaching and our prevailing belief have we not forgotten that there is another side to the truth, which needs to be practically considered? That even the kind providence of God has its sterner and severer aspect, and that the same Father who loves us knows how to punish? "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord," said the Apostle, "we persuade men." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "Whoso defiles the temple of God," i. e. the human body in which the soul dwells, "him shall God destroy." "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap;—he that soweth to his flesh shall reap corruption." Words of tremendous significance, but founded upon philosophy and experience not less than Scripture truth! Have we not kept them, and other words like them, too much in obscurity, until we almost shrink from hearing them? When such language is used in our pulpits, it is called "Orthodox preaching," as if out of place. We escape the censure of Burns to fall under that of Pope, and "never mention hell to ears polite." We enlarge upon the dignity and excellence and glory of our human

nature, until we can scarcely explain to ourselves the fact that after all we are miserable sinners! that there is not one of us that doeth good, no, not one! that somehow or other we do need a change of heart before we come into the kingdom of God, and that it is only by constant watchfulness and prayer, and the promised help of the Holy Spirit, that we obtain mastery over the flesh, and enter into the freedom of the sons of God. Yet our people know that they are sinners, and need to be addressed as such. They go to church for that purpose. They feel the hold the world has upon them, and desire redemption from it. They are tired of hearing "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," and "The words of one who singeth a pleasant song," when they ought to hear the trumpet voice, "Awaken, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." There is an earnestness in the Gospel that we do not sufficiently preach. Is it because we do not sufficiently feel it? Look deeper, dear brethren, into the mystery of our human nature, so grand and yet so base, so glorious and yet so vile, so godlike and yet so contemptible! It is the spirit struggling against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit. "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In the third place, we are freed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, from the bondage of human authority. Under him we claim full liberty of thought and action by which we are individually responsible to God alone. It is the Protestant principle of private judg-

ment, which we, as Liberal Christians, have maintained, as we think, more consistently than the majority of other churches. They are, in general, bound by creeds, confessions of faith, articles of belief, which at the best are explanations or interpretations of Scripture, but are made the standard of orthodoxy, the ground of fellowship, the condition of church membership, in the several communions where adopted. In contradistinction from them all, and in accordance with gospel instruction, we accept no human creed as the authorized symbol of Christian belief or test of Christian fellowship; we refuse to let any man, or body of men, whether Pope, or Council, or Synod, or Conference, or any other organization, stand between us and God, to settle points of belief, to bind our consciences, to prescribe our religious duties. Equally we claim no right to prescribe for others, or to condemn them for differing with us. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."

To this law of liberty we have thus far been faithful as a denomination, both in theory and practice; and although from time to time resolutions have been passed at our public meetings explanatory of our religious standing and practical work, it has never been in such a way as to trammel individual freedom, or establish directly or indirectly terms of admission, or conditions of acknowledged fellowship among our churches. The same men by whom such

resolutions have been prepared, have afterwards, in some instances, materially changed their views without withdrawing from their connection with us; and others who have at the time contended against the adoption, with widest dissent, still claiming Christian allegiance, have been left undisturbed, perhaps cherished all the more.

From this treatment of religious doctrine and rejection of religious tests has proceeded the most satisfactory mutual forbearance, by which, though greatly differing, we have met as brothers on equal terms. We have also been very severe, and have a right to be, against those who deny us the Christian name because we follow not in the same company with them, and have quoted Christ's own words in their condemnation. Thus we have stood, and have boasted of standing, upon the broad principle of Protestant Unitarian Christian freedom: "Call no man Master on earth." "All ye are brethren." There is probably no point upon which we are so nearly unanimous as upon this, or so little likely to change. I do not know an individual, clergyman or layman, who would not disclaim all desire to change it. Certainly, if we were to depart from it, our glory would depart from us. If I understand it, our special denominational work has been exactly this, — to demonstrate the consistency of Christian faith with Christian freedom. If our cardinal doctrine has been the unity of God, our cardinal principle has been the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free. No word of danger makes us start to our feet so quickly as



that which threatens a human authority to interfere with this Christian birthright.

But here, also, we have shown the want of practical wisdom, and have permitted the love of freedom to mislead us. We have confounded things which are quite distinct, and, in refusing arbitrary control, have neglected to use the means of safety by the necessary self-instruction and self-restraint. The fear of dogmatic invasion has betrayed us into neglect of essential truth. We have justly said that all the wide differences among Christian sects are consistent with Christian unity, but have unjustly inferred that such differences are unimportant, and devoid of practical results. It does not follow, because all have equal right to judge for themselves, that their decisions are equally good and useful; or that it matters not what a man believes, provided he is sincere. It does matter a great deal. Few things are more important to the man himself than his belief or unbelief. His inward life, his religious character, depends, to a great degree, upon it. It is said that his faith is everything, his belief is nothing; but this, I fear, is one of the borrowed phrases of men who substitute sentimentalism for strong religious conviction. Upon what is faith founded, considered as a pure spiritual act, but upon belief in truths reverently received? How can we have faith in God if we know nothing of him, or in Christ if we have no definite idea who and what he is? True doctrine lies at the basis of true religion. Jesus said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into



the world, to bear witness to the truth;" and we who claim to be his ministers may well devote ourselves to the same great work.

Our liberty is too apt to betray us into apathy, which is a very different thing, — as different as life from death. When an educated man says he does not care about doctrines, or what a man believes, he stultifies himself. For, consider the subject to which these doctrines apply: The being of God, and his nature and attributes. Is he our friend, or enemy, and what relation does he hold to the human family? Has he revealed himself to us, and if so, when and by whom, and what is the revelation of his will? Has he withdrawn his spiritual presence from us, or does he still work within us to will and to do? Is the soul immortal, or does it die with the bodily organism? Under what spiritual law does it live, now and for eternity? Is the promise of salvation a truth to be trusted, or only a pleasant dream? Can sin be forgiven and the redemption of the soul perfected, or must the sinner forever remain in hopeless misery and guilt? Can we trust in the Bible as a sufficient rule of faith and practice, or must we set it aside as a collection of myths and old wives' fables? These are not questions to which a careless ear should be turned. Upon their answer everything depends in our religious education and spiritual growth. He who scoffs at them or sets them aside, proves his shallowness of thought not less than his weakness of faith.

We need greater simplicity and directness in our inculcation of Christian truth. There is no denomination of Christians so imperfectly informed as to its prevailing belief as our own. In our pulpits and Sunday-schools too little instruction is given upon the truths of religion, on which, however, its morality must rest. Vagueness of belief therefore prevails, and scepticism of all truth is too often the natural result; and here we find another explanation why our young people leave us for other churches, and why our denominational increase is so slow. Greater definiteness of belief is needed to hold our own, or to attract others. At present there are comparatively few of our laity, especially of the young, who have grown up in our churches, who can give a reason for the faith that is in them, or a fair statement of the faith itself. Our pulpits say very little upon the subject, and when they speak it is to say that what one believes is nothing, what one is is everything. But closer scrutiny will show that when time enough is given for the fair experiment, what one believes makes him what he is, and that the rejection of religious truth paves the way for the loss of religious life. Our churches and our families crave and pine for religious education. We shall perish unless we have more of it.

For such reasons we look with favor upon every effort, however crude, in this direction. We should have proper catechisms, both for younger and older children, to teach the distinctive doctrines of our Christian faith in the Sunday-schools, and carefully

prepared courses of instruction for young men and women. Nor can I see the force of the objections so fiercely made against Statements and Confessions of Faith — call them Creeds if you will — as helps in the education of our churches, and for the diffusion of our doctrines. Not as a “campaign document,” nor as an authoritative test of Unitarian orthodoxy, nor as a means of conciliating those who have made up their minds to think evil of us, do what we may; but for our own guidance and support, and that our light, if we have any, may be put in a candlestick to give light to the household, and not hidden, as if we were ashamed of it, where it cannot be seen. Every separate church might well have such a Statement of Faith, sufficiently minute for the purposes of practical instruction, and although there would be many shades of difference among them, they would come much nearer to agreement than is generally supposed. Every local Conference might work to the same end, and by harmonizing differences without prejudice to the Christian idea, could bind our churches at once more closely to each other and to Jesus Christ. Even in more general assemblages we might find some method of similar action, if we could only get together in the spirit of love and Christian brotherhood, instead of criticism and recrimination, to learn and declare the truth as it is in Jesus. We are sure that it could be done in some way that would not involve the objectionable features of creed-making, and yet give us the advantage of greater explicitness and frankness in all our work. After all hesitation so natural to a

Unitarian on such a subject, I can almost agree with your eloquent preacher of the last Conference (Dr. Bellows), "that there is no duty more urgent than the duty of furnishing our people with a definite Christian Statement of Faith." But in saying this, neither he nor I would forget the limitations. As a denomination we cannot "change our base," or forfeit our birthright of freedom. When it comes to the test of Christian fellowship, we can go no further than the words of him whom we follow, "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

In these three respects, then, it appears that by the rules of Protestant interpretation Christ sets us free: 1. From ritualistic religion; 2. From superstitious fears; 3. From human authority; and in each of them we also learn that common sense, experience, expediency, the usage of the Christian Church, the example and commands of Christ himself, must control us in the use of freedom. The liberty is therefore not license, even when most unreservedly given; not freedom from wholesome restraint, but the opportunity to exercise a larger and nobler manhood in the service of God by the attainment of personal spiritual life.

But there is still something more and deeper that remains to be said, for we are speaking not of liberty in the abstract, — if such a phrase can be allowed, — but of the liberty which we claim as Christian believers, and which does not seek to throw off its allegiance to Jesus Christ. If there are those who deny

that allegiance, they would take but little interest in what I have said, or have yet to say. But addressing a Christian Conference of those who, by the first words of their organization, recognize their "obligation as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to prove their faith by self-denial, and by the devotion of their lives and possessions to the service of God, and the building up the Kingdom of his Son," I can speak with confidence upon this point, as one which has been already settled beyond dispute. Yet it may be well for us to be reminded of the explicitness and frequency with which this allegiance to Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church is asserted and claimed. For it is sometimes necessary to go back to first principles, the obviousness of which may cause them to be overlooked.

The quiet dignity with which Jesus Christ assumed his place as Leader and authorized Teacher is not less remarkable than his gentleness and humility. In the Sermon on the Mount, which declares the principles of the new dispensation, we hear the tone of a law-giver who expects to be obeyed: "It hath been said — but I say unto you." He sets aside the whole ritual law of Moses to bring it to a higher spiritual fulfilment. He declares the will of God as one who knows it, and requires men to receive and obey it as his commands. When the sorrowful and sinful are before him, he not only gives them words of sympathy, but invites them to himself as the great Consoler, — "Come unto me, ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." When the young



man came to him for the way to eternal life, he not only counselled him to obey the Commandments, and to sell all he had and give to the poor, but said, also: "Come and follow me." When his disciples disputed about precedence, he said: "Call no man master on earth, for One is your Master, and all ye are brethren." To believe in him and obey him was made by himself the test of Christian discipleship. He called himself the Way, the Truth and the Life, the door by which men must enter into the fold, the vine of which his disciples are the branches, the light of the world, the living fountain where we can quench our spiritual thirst, the anointed messenger and the beloved Son of God.

The ingenuity of eriticism may reject or explain away his words, as reported in the Gospels here and there, but his claims to our allegiance, and his assertion of authority to teach, with power to save, pervade the whole Scriptures and underlie its instructions, so that nothing short of its total rejection, as having no historieal basis, can place Jesus in any other light. "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am."

Still more explictly, if possible, and as the burden of all their preaching, did the early disciples speak. Throughout the "Acts" of the Apostles, and in their letters to the churches, the one great aim in view was to preach Jesus Christ as the Leader and Redeemer, the Captain of our salvation, the Author and finisher of our faith. We may say, if we wish to reject their verdict, that they were mistaken, and all



wrong, but we cannot question the fact that they so preached Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Whenever the apostles speak of the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free, and of the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, it is the liberty which belongs to the obedient and loyal followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Why then call it freedom, if it is under a master and a King? Why not call it Christian subservience, or anything else rather than freedom, which implies self-direction and control?" For the same reason that the Psalmist said, in words which only those can understand who have learned the lesson of self-command, "I have walked at liberty because I have kept thy law." The teaching of Jesus Christ is the truth of God, and his commands are the law of God, and our spiritual freedom is then most perfectly attained when we have most fully received his truth and law into our hearts. As he himself said, "If ye abide in my words ye shall be my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

There are two conceivable ways by which men may come to the knowledge of the highest spiritual truth and to a perfect system of morality. One may be called, for distinction, the rational or philosophical; the other is the path of Christian obedience. By the former a few persons of studious minds and with opportunity for self-scrutiny and metaphysical thought may rise from step to step, seeking after God if haply they may find Him, until at last they come to

the highest that man can know, and find it to be the same which Jesus taught to the Samaritan woman eighteen hundred years ago: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Or, in seeking to attain the perfect ideal of human virtue, we determine to live every day up to our highest convictions of duty, to do no wrong, to indulge no impure thought, to have no selfish motive, to make the best of every faculty, and control every tendency of evil. Slowly and painfully we struggle upwards, with many doubts and fears, questioning of the way and with uncertain aim, until, having labored long and hard, we come, perhaps, to one who "opens the Scriptures," and shows us, in Christ's example and the gospel system of morality, the rule by which we have unwittingly been striving to live.

To the vast majority of men, and to the young universally, the plainer path of Christian obedience is the safer way. Others must judge for themselves; but for myself I am ready to avow my need of a guide and Saviour. By voluntary and hearty submission to Jesus Christ, we are not humbled, but exalted; not brought under a law of bondage, but under the law of liberty, which is perfect freedom. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes."

It is well, therefore, that in the first formation of this Conference of Unitarian Christian Churches, notwithstanding the exaggerated fear of creeds, the

clear confession of Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of men was made in our Preamble, and *is thereby implied in all that we do*. If the force of that plain avowal has been impaired by subsequent action, I regret it; and certainly that was not the intention of the Conference in the changes made.

The Ninth Article of the Constitution was, in my opinion, a mistake of liberality, with good intention, but without the desired result. It was intended to express no more than is true in all associated religious bodies, even with those who sign the strictest creed,—that differences of opinion may exist to whatever extent the honest interpretation of words may allow, and that the proceedings of the Conference, from time to time, are binding only upon the churches that voluntarily consent to them. This had already been expressed, to some extent, by a resolution adopted before the Conference was organized, and it was only desired by the majority of the Conference to emphasize the same principle of congregational independence by incorporating the substance of the resolution into the Constitution itself. Unfortunately, in the last hurry of action, after a long and excited discussion, the Article was adopted in a form which seems to do a great deal more, and almost to neutralize our platform, making this Conference of Christian Churches as open to those who reject Christ as to those who receive him. If we could take out of the Ninth Article the words "Including the Preamble and Constitution," it would be greatly improved. This would leave our congregational liberty, as mem-

bers of the Conference, unimpaired, while the Conference itself would remain where it was first placed, upon a distinctive Christian basis — an organization into which none but Christian believers would desire to come. But if this method is impracticable or unwise, perhaps some equally efficacious way may be found of expressing our unshaken purpose to stand where we have always stood, as Unitarian Christian Churches, as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and “having done all to stand” ; for this, most certainly, at all times and in every place, it is our bounden duty to do. As a Conference of Churches, and as members of it, the first and indispensable requisite to Christian success is to place ourselves openly, earnestly and unequivocally on Christian ground. Standing there, we may welcome those who believe more or who believe less to work with us, but we cannot either remould our faith or bring contempt on our Christian allegiance for the sake of working with them. A firm and steady adherence to our proper place, in defence of Christ and liberty, without turning either to the right hand or left, going straight forward to do the work of evangelists, “in the cause of Christian faith and works,” is the only rightful course for us to pursue.

It would be a sad mistake to court the favor of those called orthodox by any language but that which most plainly conveys the faith we really hold. We desire their fellowship and affection, but only on equal terms. Still greater would be the mistake and the sin to lower the Christian standard for the sake of

attracting those who cannot submit themselves to the gospel claims of Jesus Christ.

It is sometimes thought that the way to reach worldly men, and to commend our preaching, is to meet them half way; to preach doctrines that do not require too much faith, and are not strict enough to arouse their fears. No blunder could be greater than that. Faithfulness to Christ is the way to the sinner's heart. Irreligious men are not attracted by scepticisms and denials, but rather amused or disgusted. In the midst of their sins and neglect of God, they have sense enough to know that the fault is not in Christ's gospel, but in their own waywardness and guilt. If they come to the religious life at all, they ask for a Saviour in whom they can trust.

In one of our Western cities the attempt was made to establish a religious society upon what was called the broadest possible foundation, and a covenant was prepared in which no allusion to God was made. The attention of the clergyman was called to the omission, and he explained it by saying that there were a great many infidels and atheists in the community whom he wished to conciliate! Instead of conciliating them, they laughed him to scorn. Among "philosophers, so called," such refinements and evasions of truth, to use no stronger terms, may answer; and ministers in their studies, who know little of the world's throbbing, suffering heart, may imagine that the speculative difficulties which trouble them are the same which keep men from righteousness and truth. But when we come to the working-day world,



neither a religion without God, nor a Christianity without Christ, will do.

This is the final explanation of the discouraging reports from so many of our churches. All over the Western States, where the call for Liberal Christianity has been so often heard, little bands of earnest men and women have gathered, with every hope of success, and for a time the cause of Christ and liberty has promised well, but too often it has ended in dullness and decay and death. I could name many instances of this, and more that will soon be added to the list. And why? Because neither gospel preaching nor Christian institutions have been the agency employed. Dispensing with the Christian ordinances, with prayer-meetings and Bible instructions to the young, speaking of Jesus Christ as seldom as possible, and never, by any chance, calling him Lord or Master, the pulpit has sunk into insignificance, and the pews into emptiness. Young men who had been educated for the Christian ministry, without ever having professed faith in Christ, and unable to profess it, with a fair amount of talent, with a general good purpose, and with a vague impression that the whole community would be anxiously waiting to hear their gospel of deliverance, have come to those Western outposts with great expectations, to leave them with great chagrin. And why? Because they have had nothing to say of their own which was permanently worth hearing, and they could not say "Thus saith the Lord." They have worked bravely from their own brains to



spin the spider-web of ethical instruction and metaphysics, until it has proved too weak to hold the attention of their hearers, and then, having no deeper treasury to draw from, have given up in despair, leaving their fields of work not only unimproved, but unfit for subsequent culture, as if the life and heart had been taken from the soil. I have seen it so often that I am heart-sick at the sight. We have had enough of it.

If we would gain Christian success, we must send missionaries who believe in Christ. Send men who love him and would die for him, as their Saviour and friend, and we shall soon see the difference of result. There is something in personal love and allegiance which overpowers all abstractions. When we impersonate religious zeal by "standing up for Jesus," we feel a fervor of self-sacrifice such as he himself manifested, and which no discouragement can repress. Without it, there is no missionary zeal, almost no missionary success. We have erred in this. We refuse the cross and yet expect the crown. Instead of bringing men up to the gospel, we lower the gospel to them, and so dilute its instructions with worldly morality and skeptical philosophy, that those whom we court complain of its weakness, and go elsewhere to hear the needed rebuke and receive the desired strength. We want John the Baptist to preach repentance, and John the Apostle to preach self-consecration and love.

Dear brethren, consider these things. I know nothing of "right wing and left wing," and have

lived too far from the strife to feel their flapping, though I have heard the noise. Let my thirty-six years of hard experience entitle me to speak plainly, and my whole testimony will be given in one word. Be faithful to Jesus Christ. Hold fast to freedom, but equally, nay, more earnestly, to our allegiance. Without it we are nothing, and can do nothing, and all our fancied progress and success will prove to be a delusion and a snare. Stand up with Jesus Christ to do his work. Do not say that such words are a "slogan" of religious cant. They are the battle-cry against sin and wrong. They are the heartfelt expression of loyalty to our Leader and Prince.

To our young men especially, whose love of freedom is impatient of authority, whether human or divine, I would earnestly appeal to reconsider their premises, that they may better understand their work and how to do it. Is your object practical usefulness? to redeem men from sin? to bring them to the knowledge and love of God? And can you hope to be sufficient to yourselves in such a work? Compare your actual success with that of men not half as strong in education and knowledge as yourselves. Why are they doing twice as much work? Because they work with stronger and more definite faith. They have an authority to lean upon to which you dare not appeal. There is no use in your going forth as missionaries unless you have a positive and clearly defined religion to teach. Take your Bibles with you, and argue from them as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, if you would hope to make

converts or to hold your own. To preach ourselves is the poorest of all preaching. Especially in the stirring and practical West, youthful lucubrations and Hegelian researches are not what men go to church to hear. They want plain preaching, founded upon the word of God.

In this respect our American Unitarian Association has been severely blamed, as lending aid and comfort to those who preach a gospel of their own, and thus as perverting the funds intrusted to its care. Whether or not its officers have laid themselves open to this censure, it is not for me to say. Probably in the exercise of their discretion they have sometimes erred, as which of us has not? I am not here in their defence, but I am sure that many things have been lately said on this subject which had better have been unsaid and unwritten. Unjust and ungenerous words recoil upon those who use them, and we can find no excuse for some words that have been spoken. We can see no good to come from such severity, nor from the equally severe reerimination that has thus been provoked. "Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

The truth is, that the faults found, so far as they exist, lie at the door of the denomination, rather than of the agents who have administered its affairs. Carelessness about Scriptural truth too much pre-

vails, so that when men of positive beliefs are wanted they cannot always be found, and when found are not always wanted. We have been trying the experiment for thirty years past with how little belief Christian ministers, or ministers in Christian pulpits, can get along. Like the famous horse that was reduced to one straw a day, some have come down to very low diet, and the same result has in some cases, spiritually, been seen.

Seriously and sadly, we have been drifting away from Christ in many of our churches, and forgetting the old landmarks. Drifting, we say; not deliberately deserting or denying him, though sometimes betrayed even into that extreme. "Who cares for what a man believes?" is freely asked. "What kind of a man is he? That is what we want to know. We are satisfied with Christ's own test, 'by their fruits ye shall know them.'" But did Jesus choose men who rejected him to preach his gospel? If Peter had continued to deny him, and Thomas had refused to believe, would they have been made his apostles? "Not every one who saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father who is in heaven." Yes; but Jesus was speaking only of the true and false professors of his name, and the test of truth was obedience. We may go yet further, and admit that the unbeliever in Christ who is a good man, is better than the believer who is a bad man; but we want neither one nor the other as gospel ministers. Why can we not use a little logie and common-sense in religious as well as secular affairs? For the want

of it, and for want of closer study of the Bible, we have doubtless been drifting away from our proper moorings, and have imagined it was progress when it has been the reverse. It is much easier to go away from the Christian religion than to improve upon it.

I have sometimes thought, "so foolish was I and blind," that this is becoming the settled and determined tendency of our Unitarian body and of this Conference; that the banner upon which "Christ and Liberty" is inscribed is to be pulled down and another set up, on which liberty alone is written. Such thought, whenever it has come, has filled me with grief, for I love the Unitarian Church as I love my own family and home. But loyalty to Christ comes first. Speaking for myself, and I can speak only for myself, however dear to me the associations of the present and past, I could never consent to remain in any church or communion which is ashamed of Jesus Christ and his gospel. The act which strikes that name from the banner would strike my name from the roll. The Christianity without Christ is no Christianity for me. With my convictions of duty I should have no right, and should feel no wish to be the member of any church, however refined and cultivated and liberal, where the name of Jesus Christ is held in doubtful honor, for I believe his words, "He that is ashamed of me, of him will I be ashamed."

But, thank God, we have no abiding fear that the Unitarian body, or any part of it, will take such suicidal course. The love of peace and liberty, or tenderness for the feelings of hesitating and doubting brethren, may at times betray us into weakness or



inconsistency, but the heart of the denomination is and will remain true. Its allegiance to Christ has never for a moment been lost, and will be yet more fully vindicated. Let us not be impatient with each other, or with ourselves. This love of liberty is a Christian impulse, and those who have escaped from the house of bondage may be pardoned for exaggerated fears. We must suffer long and be kind, forbearing one another, forgiving one another. Be not too great sticklers about words and phrases. The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life. But in the midst of all charity and tenderness of construction, with absolute unwillingness to encroach upon the rights of others, we must yet deliver our own souls. In some form or other, unequivocally and steadfastly, openly and fearlessly, we must continue to assert ourselves as a Christian Church, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

Let us not be discouraged. We have our troubles and internal conflicts. No Church in Christendom is without its own. Look into them more closely, and we shall find that other denominations, even those that make the greatest boast of union, are torn with schisms and disputes. Our Church has its faults, and we speak freely of them without disguise; but, after all, it is a dear mother Church to us, in which we have found and kept Christian freedom and Christian faith. We sometimes hear it said that Unitarians can never become a strong organization. Rebuke every such word. Let us rather heartily unite upon our two acknowledged principles—Christ and liberty,



the gospel and the freedom of the gospel, — and thus place ourselves in the vanguard of human progress, devoting ourselves, as our Christian profession declares, “to the service of God, and the building up the Kingdom of his Son.”

Finally, yet more than all, we have insisted upon allegiance to Jesus Christ, and upon its full and open avowal, not chiefly because it is the doctrinal truth and the only basis on which a Christian church can rightly be built, but because it is also the only standard under which we can successfully resist the encroachments of sin, and establish the principles of Christian civilization. For this reason, chiefly, we Unitarians have done so little in proportion to our means. “One thing thou lackest; come and follow me.” Christian faith is the great effective force of Christian philanthropy, of Christian work. As in our struggle for national life and freedom, the flag of our country, which some called a painted rag, with its stars and stripes, was the rallying cry, and the sight of it made our hearts beat quick, and filled our eyes with tears, and inspired our souls with heroic courage; so, in the harder struggle against the enemies of God and in defence of his truth and righteousness, and for the rescue of the down-trodden and oppressed, the cross of Jesus Christ, which is to some no more than a piece of dead wood, is the standard under which alone we conquer. Let us never desert it! “Be faithful unto death, and thou shalt obtain the crown of everlasting life.” Amen.

# REPORT.

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NEW YORK, Oct. 19, 1870.

THE Conference was called to order in the Church of the Messiah, at 10 A. M. Hon. George Partridge, of St. Louis, Vice-President, in the chair.

Rev. Calvin Lincoln, of Hingham, offered prayer.

The Hon. George Partridge declining to preside during the meeting, Rev. Dr. Bellows moved the appointment, by the Chair, of a committee to nominate a president *pro tempore*; and Rev. Robert Collyer, Rev. Charles H. Brigham, and Rev. John D. Wells were chosen said Committee. Rev. Dr. Bellows then read the

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

The Council of the National Conference have the honor to report —

That, since the last meeting, we have been called to lament the loss of the honored Christian gentleman whose Presidency gave to our last session so much dignity, courtesy and efficiency. The National Conference meets without a head! The Hon. Thomas Dawes Eliot, whose name fills that place in our record, and whom we fondly hoped again to see performing with his distinguished fairness, wisdom and grace, its difficult duties, has been five months in his grave. Few American citizens have left a purer record behind them, or have illustrated with more practical force and beauty the Christian life and faith. His memory is worthy of being added to that of his illustrious predecessor in the short line of our Presidents. What could we ask for our National Conference greater than that their successors in this office might never fall below the standard these departed brethren have erected?

In the Fourth Article of the By-Laws it is provided that "the Council shall have it for its duty to keep itself accurately informed of the plans and operations of the various organizations in our

body, and of the state of the individual churches; inviting correspondence and soliciting reports, to be sent in one month before the biennial meeting, in which the general condition of the parish, its Sunday-school, charities and general working may be set forth, to the end that the Conference may know what the wants and wishes of the churches are, somewhat more particularly than it is possible to learn in the hurry of the biennial meeting.

The Council reports that in the present organization of its board, these functions and duties are impossible of fulfillment. The Council is composed of ten members from different parts of the nation — the Corresponding Secretary, *ex officio*, making another — some of them a thousand miles apart, and can hold only very infrequent meetings, never having had a full one. The Secretaries, in like manner, are widely separated, and cannot readily confer with each other. There is no single officer whose time is devoted exclusively to the various duties indicated in the Fourth By-Law, while to carry out its requirements would absorb the whole time of a man of the highest administrative ability. The Council recommends that the Conference shall instruct its Committee on Nominations to keep in view, in naming candidates for the Council, their neighborhood to each other, and the possibility of full quarterly meetings. It recommends, also, the appointment of one salaried Secretary, whose whole time shall be devoted, under the Council, to the duties described in the Fourth By-Law — which, by no means, overstates the degree of method and the fullness of statistical returns, which must distinguish this organization before it can accomplish the objects of its existence.

The Council has held six meetings since the last Conference. It has maintained the most friendly, frank and confidential relations with the American Unitarian Association, which to special and independent duties of its own, adds the relation of an executive and financial body combined, to the legislative or advisory functions of this body. The Secretary of that Association and the Chairman of the Council have been in steady correspondence and frequent personal intercourse, so that nothing that concerns the great interests of our churches and cause has escaped the most anxious and painstaking consideration of both. It is not often that two bodies, one old and the other new, very differently constituted and easily to be antagonized by imprudence or pride, have worked together for five years without a jar, as the National Conference and the American Unitarian

Association have done. There has been no jealousy, no suspicion, and no dissent between these bodies. Without conspiracy they have agreed, and from independent considerations come to similar conclusions. While ferment, antagonism, and party spirit (perhaps none too much for health) have agitated our body, its two chief organizations have been in perfect peace and harmony. It is certainly worth while for the Conference to note this fact, and to ask itself to what is it due? May it not be that those whose central duties and relations make them extensively acquainted with the varied constitution and wants of our thinly-scattered but wide spread body, discover the necessity of a very broad policy, and are compelled to widen their scope at any expense of personal taste or private opinion in favor of the largest liberty consistent with Christian loyalty? That the American Unitarian Association and the Council of the National Conference have perfectly agreed on this point, is at least a proof that broad and varied relations with all schools and types of Unitarian faith, lead to a conviction of the duty and safety of a large toleration for opinion in our body.

The first and most important subject which the Council would report upon is the condition and prospects of our Local Conferences. In view of the Resolution passed by the last Conference, the Council, through one of its members, Rev. Mr. Lowe, has attended most of the meetings of the Local Conferences, and has observed with profound satisfaction their steady increase in zeal and wisdom. The last Conference passed the following Resolution:—

*Resolved*, That the Secretaries of the various Local Conferences, with Rev. Mr. Scandlin, of the Worcester Conference, as Chairman, be a committee to report on the condition and workings of these bodies up to the present time, and to form and carry out some plan embodying the principles contained in the paper presented by Rev. Mr. Scandlin for a more thorough organization in our separate societies, and for greater uniformity of action and efficiency in doing the work of the denomination.

Rev. Mr. Scandlin reported a year ago, in the *Monthly Journal*, on this subject. We do not wish to anticipate the reports of the local Secretaries, on a subject which is to be considered, in the Council's opinion at least, as the most important before this Conference; yet this much needs to be said: The two years between the Syracuse meeting and the last were marked by the creation of our system of Local Conferences. The Council reported fourteen as existing at our last session. It is able to



add six to this number, making twenty, from all which we hope to hear. They have, it is well known, the variety which marks everything in our denominational life — some being accommodations of old ministerial or church Associations, and others being wholly new. Possibly greater uniformity may be desired; but that is an open question. The two years since our last Conference have been marked by the increased activity of these bodies. Their meetings have been more spirited, their action more vigorous. Their various Secretaries have met from time to time in council at Boston, where most valuable and effective discussions, with comparisons of experience, have developed a better wisdom, which has been carried out in the Local Conferences with marked effects. The chief feature in the Local Conferences and the life they are developing is the free, untechnical, laical character of the Christian life, and the consequent ability of ordinary men and women to enter into it and contribute something better than their thoughts, *i.e.* their affections and experiences, to the fellowship of faith and love. Ministerial fellowship is good, and, indeed, better than it is now the fashion to hold it; but it is no substitute for the fraternal communion of fellow-Christians in respect to the common objects of their faith. Until the laymen in the churches are alive to the duties of all members of the Christian Church, and their own in particular, we shall have only a very unsatisfactory animation in our sacred cause. But to draw and hold the attention of the laymen, our Local Conferences must have positive, definite, intelligible, and important business on hand, — business of a specially Christian kind; business which aims by practical measures at the real influence of the churches upon the ignorance, the sin, the poverty, the bigotry, the apathy, that surround them. It is not the laymen's fault that they will not give up a day or two of real business at home to make-believe do something in the name of religion at a National or Local Conference. But let a real, statable and practicable set of measures be inaugurated, having God's glory, Christ's kingdom, and man's happiness — if they be not identical — for their object, — something which real work, or a reasonable amount of sacrifice and money will accomplish — and our laymen are ready to take hold; often more ready than our ministers are to ask them to, or to lead them. The Liberal ministry — and the best men in it would be the quickest to confess it — do not yet fully understand their own business. They are not yet agreed on the true constitution and order of a Christian Church; nor how to



actively employ all the various ages and faculties and aptitudes of a Christian congregation, each in some way favorable to the common life. Nor have we yet learned the full secret of co-operation between Churches that ought to be sisters indeed. The disposition of Churches to make their own organization the beginning and the end of their interest is utterly contrary to apostolic order and precept, or to permanent life and success.

Deeply impressed with the radical importance of this subject, the Council have invited the Secretaries of the Local Conferences to make direct reports to this body, concerning the doings of these Local Conferences — their successes and failures, their difficulties or their furtherances, with their own advice touching any improvement possible in our present methods. The Council is convinced that the life of the individual churches is what is to be sought with the greatest anxiety; that the individual churches cannot flourish in isolation and orphanage, but only in families; that the Local Conferences are the nearest this body can get to the individual churches, and therefore that their vigor and success is the first practical object we have to consider. Too much time, wisdom, and pains cannot be expended upon this subject.

Next in importance to the more efficient organization of parishes and of Local Conferences, the Council feels to be the subject of the supply of ministers.

Our present supply is derived from two sources: 1st, our theological schools, with an occasional student from some minister's study; 2d, converts from the ministry of other Christian bodies. To begin with the last, as least important, it is encouraging to see an increasing tendency towards our ministerial ranks from other denominations. The last two years have given us from this source not less than fifteen, and several of them of a high quality of promise, and of tried efficiency and settled character in their former ecclesiastical relations. It is well known that very many others in the Methodist and Congregational Churches would gladly find refuge from their doubts and difficulties in our free communion if the way over were not too rough for their feet. It seems to the Council desirable to have some place and time and proper tribunal, where ministers from other denominations can apply for examination, offer proofs of Christian character and competency, and receive a license from this Conference to preach within our domain as Christian ministers. It seems to the Council to the last degree important not to encourage inconstant, unreliable, ill-furnished

or incompetent men, who have failed in their own denomination, to enter our ministry. They are sure to fail even more disastrously in our pulpits than in their own. Again, the sharp and serious testing of personal and Christian character, without regard to theoretical opinions, is a matter of urgent importance, not only with this class, but all other candidates for our ministry.

It is complained to the Council that here and there individual churches accept as their pastors men whom Local Conferences have refused to acknowledge as ministers on account of proven vices and immoralities. This, if true, is a sore evil, and a great blow at the rightful moral influence of these bodies, as well as the ministerial profession. If, however, the Conference decides either to appoint a general committee for the examination of candidates from other denominations and from all other sources, except, perhaps, our theological schools; or if it asks each Local Conference to appoint such a committee, it would clothe these committees with a more serious moral authority than they now possess. The Council need not remind this Conference how grave a matter the selection of such a central committee would be; how devout, wise, and candid, how fearless and faithful its members should be; how incapable of partisanship, personal prejudice, sentimental feebleness, or logical hardness; and how devoted to the real good of the Church and the ministry!

Another point of policy has engaged the attention of the Council in this connection. Should not our two theological schools be asked to offer six months' free instruction to all ministers from other denominations desirous of joining us, and should not a residence of that period be ordinarily required from all men inexperienced in the ministry? It would test the quality and character of the candidates, besides insuring their better acquaintance with the tenets of the denomination.

But the main source of our ministerial supply must be from our theological schools; and how to recruit them with increased numbers, and make them more efficient instruments for turning out able, well-instructed, and zealous ministers, is our problem.

One experiment in the full-tide of success when we separated, the Boston Theological School, has been abandoned after careful consideration, and much praise for the labors of its founders and professors and patrons, as a needlessly costly and somewhat superfluous enterprise. Its very plan was to draw from a much wider field and a much lower stratum of society the materials for our ministry; to cheapen the cost of training and diminish

the standard of admission until none with any real desire for this work should be excluded from it. It gathered rapidly some good and some bad materials; it was steadily sifting out the coarser matter when its costliness and its neighborhood to the Cambridge Divinity School made it expedient to merge it in that institution. It did not live an independent life long enough to judge fairly of its possibilities.

The union of the two schools demanded very important changes in the regulations and methods of the Cambridge School, which have been made, with what effect remains to be seen. In becoming merged in the Cambridge School, the Boston School carried another class of students and another standard of culture with it, which must have influenced very decidedly the character of the school. Sometimes the invigoration which native and untutored forces bring with them, into seats of education, more than compensates for the dilution of culture which the influx of less trained minds must always occasion. We need to learn from the visitors of the Cambridge School, the professors, and from any of our delegates who have carefully observed the matter, just what the effect has been of this union of students with a more and a less scholastic standard of admission and culture; how far the new policy promises favorable results. Is the tone of the school, in respect of moral character, as strict and high as it has hitherto been? What class of minds, and with what tendencies does the non-requirement of a college degree, or its equivalent, bring into the school? What is the proportion of college-graduates to others? Have the professors any theory in regard to the failure of our colleges—Harvard, for instance—to supply us with the old ratio of theological students from every class?

In regard to the Meadville School, the question of whose removal to some other site has been agitated ever since our last Convention, the Council awaits the report of the Committee (of five, three laymen and two ministers) appointed by the Conference, and ordered to report to the Council. Meanwhile, it may safely be said that the subject has received a great deal of attention, but how thorough the investigation has been is another question. Obstacles to removal of a legal character exist, which might probably be overcome. Doubts, also, as to the soundness of the reasons alleged for the decline of the Meadville School, are entertained. One thing alone is certain; the more active and influential ministers of our faith in the West are usually in favor of the removal of the school. That Chicago has raised a

fund of \$50,000 to sustain the school, if transferred to that city, is a proof of great public spirit among the Liberal Christians of that community, as also of earnest conviction in our most promising and influential Western centre, of the importance of the transfer. And one way, and perhaps a wise one, out of the difficulty, is for our Chicago friends to try their own plan and establish a school on their own basis, without disturbing the Meadville School. A year or two would better test its necessity and usefulness than all our debates and speculations. In the opinion of the Council the money consideration should not weigh much against more general considerations of duty and policy. In the pressing demand for an educated and able ministry, the efficiency of our theological schools, their attractiveness and their professional ability, are matters of most urgent concern. Under the changed conditions of time, space, and cost of living, the old necessity of Eastern and Western schools loses something of its importance. The quality of our schools is more important than their number. A still deeper question exists, whether our denomination would not greatly strengthen itself and improve the whole tone of theological preparation, as well as ministerial character, by uniting our efforts (without abandoning our existing schools) in favor of carrying out practically the resolution offered by Rev. E. E. Hale, in the last Conference, *i. e.* : —

*Resolved*, That the Conference respectfully asks the corporation of Harvard College to consider the possibility of maintaining, in that institution, a school of theology, in which there may be teachers and scholars of every religious denomination.

In what way could this Liberal Christian body express so unmistakably its confidence in the essential principles and opinions which it represents, as to throw down every barrier to the most unsectarian and impartial investigation of Scriptural and religious truths; and what method could it so well employ to bring into comparison and contrast the views of so-called Orthodox and Liberal Christians, as to favor the free unfolding of both by the most distinguished scholars, in the undenominational university at Cambridge? Would not noble, truth-seeking, and earnest young men, of a class which now too generally avoids the study of theology in sectarian institutions, be drawn to a place where equal and open intercourse between inquiring minds was maintained on principle, and where the best results of theological learning could be had from leading scholars of all communions? Without affirming that our denomination has not much to learn, as



well as much to teach, it may safely be said that such a movement would do more to lift theology to her old throne, as queen of the sciences, than any other that could be instituted. The Council recommends, therefore, that the whole question of our policy, respecting our theological schools, be given into the hands of a committee, with instructions to investigate it in all its relations, and report in writing to the next Conference. Meanwhile it advises that the question of Meadville School, and its removal, be left with the Trustees of that institution, in whom this Conference feel a perfect confidence.

In regard to theatre-meetings, free churches, fellowship with other Christian bodies, and the endowment of Antioch College, special committees will report to you in the course of this meeting.

It remains to the Council to inform the Conference what action has been taken upon the following points:—

1. The establishment of a centre of missionary influence on the European Continent, in the form of a Unitarian Church at Paris. The Council conferred with American friends in Paris by letter, and with distinguished friends of the enterprise in Boston. The American Unitarian Association, in conjunction with the Council, corresponded with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association upon a combined effort to sustain a mission in Paris. The American Unitarians in Paris saw many difficulties in the way. The British Unitarians manifested a sincere interest, and promised co-operation; but doubted the possibility of success. Fortunately, the Rev. Dr. Eliot, being abroad, at much labor and some cost, repaired to Paris, and made a personal investigation into the case. He advised that we should, for the present, confine ourselves to strengthening the hands of Rev. Athanase Coquerel, and his colleagues, who being as Unitarians ejected from the performance of pastoral functions in the Reformed Church of France, are laboring with success in halls and churches, hired and maintained by themselves, without government subsidy. Pasteur Coquerel had lately secured an eligible and central church in Paris, which he agreed should be open to our ministers at periods of the Sunday not occupied by his own single service at noon. Dr. Eliot advised that the American Unitarian Association should sustain M. Coquerel by a small subsidy, and that we should confine our missionary operations in Paris, for the present, to the use of the opportunity furnished by the hospitality of this church.



The great events, of which beleaguered Paris is now the anxious and suffering centre, make the practical question, for the present, one of impossible consideration. But if we had, since the last Conference, established a dozen missions in Europe, it could not have promoted the prospects of Protestantism and Liberal Christianity a hundredth part as much as the downfall of the Empire and its artificial ecclesiasticism. Now, for the first time since the massacre of St. Bartholomew, may it be said that Protestantism has fair prospects in France. Its life has been wholly sickly and constrained, even in its most conservative shapes, up to this time. It is probable that whatever the issue of the present contest may be, religious equality and freedom of worship must be henceforth allowed in France, and that the sufferings and humiliation of her people will render religious truth a much more vital concern with them than it has been with any class but her peasantry for two centuries past. It may truly be added that the downfall of the Pope's temporal sovereignty opens Italy to Protestant missions, while Germany must ere long take theology out of the hands of mere scholars, and with the immense genius she has suddenly developed for practical affairs, combine, with the speculative and critical humor she has so long indulged in matters of religion, the question how to regain the heart and the hand of her sons and daughters, alienated by secularism and hatred of church dogmas, and win them back to Christian faith and worship. Never had Liberal Christianity such an opening as a united Germany now presents, — the land of education, free thought, and religious instinct, as well as theological scepticism. It becomes our body to watch, with studious care, the movements of the Union of free Protestant ministers, of which the lamented Rothe was, and Sehnenkel is, so distinguished a leader. It is a comparatively new association, but we shall be surprised if, with the return of peace, it does not take on large proportions. The Council recommends that a special correspondence be opened with this body, and that our European relations be carefully maintained by due delegation to the meetings of this union, which promises to be the centre of liberal Protestantism in Europe. They recommend the same relations with our German brethren.

The Council regret that they have not succeeded, in spite of early and persistent efforts, in securing the attendance of official representatives from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association at this session of the National Conference. We

have authority for saying that the Rev. Mr. James, of Bristol, honored successor of Dr. Carpenter, will represent the British and Foreign Unitarian Association at the annual meeting of the American Unitarian Association, in May next. We desire to commend him in advance to the warm welcome of our brotherhood. It may be in place to say that our cause in Eng<sup>d</sup> and is steadily reviving, and wins a wider attention in literature and in statesmanship. The learned Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol laments, that, what he calls a tendency to Socinianism is the faith of the thinking class in England. "A refined Socinianism is now," he says, "the perceptible characteristic of the more thoughtful articles in our higher-class (English) journals." [69 p. of "The Church and the Age." London: John Murray. 1870.] The downfall of the Anglo-Irish Church is pretty generally recognized as only the beginning of the end of the English establishment; and with a free field in England it cannot be doubted that Unitarianism, under some more general name, would become much more acceptable than it has ever been in that land of form and ceremony, rank and station. Strangely enough, it may be now said that religious thought nowhere has bolder or abler representatives than in conservative England; and that great and even excessive radicalism of ideas does not prevent the popularity or make suspicious the personal character of men like Huxley, Tyndall, and Hooker. It is certain that, as the English reformation was due to the English people and the English laity, and not to ecclesiastics, so the reforms in theology and religious opinion are followed, not led, by the English clergy of our own day; and that the statesmen and the laity of England are the real hope of the Liberal Christian cause in Great Britain. The admission of one of our ministers into the company of the new translators of the Bible, and his unrebuked presence at the communion in Westminster Abbey, is an event of great significance, not diminished by the protest of 1,500 English priests, and the acrid debate which has since occupied so much of the secular and religious press. It has advertised our cause in a way which no efforts of our own could have equalled, besides rallying the liberality of all England around the principles of a fellowship in the Christian faith, independent of dogmatic symbols. The election of Professor Jowett as head of a college at Oxford, is another startling proof of the progress of Liberal Christian sentiments in England.

2. Turning to the home-field, the Council report that at the head of the practical measures for disseminating our principles of faith, they hold the plan submitted to the Conference at its last meeting by the Business Committee, and adopted by the Conference in the following resolution:—

*Resolved*, That the Council be requested to consider the propriety of recommending to the next meeting of the Conference, the erection by the denomination, of a National Church at Washington, D. C.

The Council have conferred through their Chairman with friends of the cause in Washington, and have examined the general subject with care.

Several things are plain:—

Washington is becoming every year more and more, not the literary, but the intellectual metropolis of the nation; not the fashionable, but the social centre. A vast sum of intelligence is gathered about the Government in the shape of clerks and attendants on Congressional measures, and all sections of the country meet there more freely in social life than anywhere else in America. There is a floating population of probably twenty thousand, composed of highly intelligent, and, in their homes, responsible persons, who fill the churches and occupy whatever room is spared to them by regular pew-holders. Of course the popular denominations can support their churches from the resident population in a city of a hundred thousand people; but even they find it to be for their interest to sustain besides, free, or what they call National Churches, for missionary purposes. The Unitarian residents in Washington, although an excellent class, are comparatively few, and have never been able to sustain our cause with external dignity. They are loyal, faithful, and zealous, but feel deeply that they cannot do what our interests as a denomination require. What they feel, and what the Council feels, is the need in Washington of an attractive and commanding edifice, consecrated to Unitarian worship, seen and known of all men, open to all, built and sustained by the denomination for national missionary purposes,—a church in which the best preaching the denomination has to offer shall be always maintained when Congress is in session. The old Unitarian society in Washington has property worth perhaps \$20,000, which it would doubtless give towards the enterprise, and the residents would still continue the pecuniary support they now offer, in pew-rents. It might even prove that a larger steady attendance and support from residents would be enjoyed by this

enterprise than we propose to reckon upon. The more truly a church and a congregation with a life of its own and with pastoral care could be provided, of course the better. But the Council is not thinking mainly of the interests or religious good of the resident Unitarians in Washington. They have no special claim on this body. It is, then, chiefly, if not wholly, as a missionary enterprise that they commend to the National Conference the raising of a hundred thousand dollars by general appeal to the liberal-minded and prosperous men in our denomination towards a National Church in Washington, to be erected under the care and sustained by the funds of the American Unitarian Association at a cost to them not to exceed \$5,000 a year for current expenses. Time will not allow them to recite all the steps by which they have arrived at this conclusion, and they must leave their deliberate suggestion to the consideration of the convention without further argument.

3. Next in order comes the necessity of more conspicuous and visible centres of our operations in our chief cities. 1st, in Boston; 2d, in New York; and 3d, in Chicago. Especially in Boston do we need to own a central building, the headquarters of our denominational cause, in which all the offices of the American Unitarian Association should be placed; a great hall for our public gatherings be secured; committee rooms, book rooms, editorial rooms for our reviews and newspapers; a place where everything relating to the general interests of our cause should be conspicuously housed and advertised. Such a building would be a subject of extended pride and interest in the denomination. The immense use to which the present obscure and inconvenient quarters of the American Unitarian Association are put, teaches us what we might expect from such an edifice as the Council desiderates. It is not proposed that the National Conference should call upon the denomination at large to effect this costly object. Measures are already in train, and will, doubtless, in due time, be in full motion, inspired by the zeal and liberality of Boston,—that glorious centre of our religious power and substance,—the safe and undecaying Rome of the future Church of America. But the Council commends to the Conference the importance of backing this auspicious undertaking with all the moral influence it possesses, while it extends to Boston and its Liberal Christian friends the expression of its utmost gratitude that such a noble enterprise should be in the heart and purpose of our brethren.



It may be safely said that New York, in the ratio of its Unitarian population, will follow Boston either before or after Chicago — which is stronger than New York in churches — in building and sustaining an edifice suited to represent the general and missionary interests of our cause. They are sorely needed in both cities.

4. The next subject on which the Council would report is the method in which the Resolution of Dr. Osgood in the last Conference has been followed out, namely:—

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this Conference that the Unitarian movement in America ought to be represented by a literary, scientific and theological review, such as may command the respect and support of the Liberal Christian public, to be issued under the auspices and at least in part sustained by the funds of the body, and that a Committee of three be appointed by the Chair to confer with the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association on the best means of establishing such a journal.

Dr. Osgood, Rev. J. H. Allen, and Mr. E. P. Whipple were appointed on this Committee of Conference. Mr. Whipple declined to serve, and Dr. Osgood soon after left the country and the denomination. Rev. Mr. Hale was invited to take his place, and to him and Rev. J. H. Allen the subject was left. A sincere effort was made to carry out the wishes of the Conference by establishing a Review in which the learning, research, and theological science of our body should be concentrated, and which could take its place beside the *Bibliotheca Sacra* and similar organs of other denominations; but the inadequate support given to the *Christian Examiner* in its best days, and of which it died; the neglect of our theologians and scholars to write for it, and the neglect of our people to subscribe for it, discouraged all efforts in this direction. No band of competent writers would agree to furnish the matter required for it; no publisher would undertake it without guarantees impossible to be procured. The denomination, in short, needed a Review, and called for a Review which the denomination refused to support. It still suffers, and must continue to suffer, in its critical, theological, and scholarly reputation for the want of such a Review; and the Council sees no present prospect of the creation of such an organ of our best thought and scholarship. It is a deplorable deficiency, and lowers not only our reputation, but our actual character as a denomination, that long claimed the highest position in learning, philosophy, and thorough critical apparatus. It may be said, indeed, that the scholarship



of the body is from this improvident neglect to use it in an organ having the support of the whole denomination, passing over to party uses, and is now much more active in the organs of irresponsible elites than in the hands of the organized strength of the Unitarian body.

All that was left was to encourage our accomplished and public spirited brother, Rev. E. E. Hale, to undertake the editorship of a monthly magazine, which should endeavor to mingle as much theological and denominational matter as the public would bear, with the more popular elements of general literature and matters connected with the progress of society and civilization. The American Unitarian Association contributed \$5,000 towards this enterprise, of which half was expected to come back in advertisement; the *Christian Examiner* sold out its good-will at a loss to its proprietors, but at a price which the purchasers could ill afford to give; and the residue of the capital being subscribed by private lovers of our cause, and believers in the popularization of our Unitarian views, the *Old and New* was started in January, 1870. It has thus far exceeded the expectations of its projectors in its acceptance with the public, and is really the first effort the denomination has ever made to test the interest of the nation at large in Liberal Christian ways of looking at all questions, whether political, social, and economical, or theological and religious. Not aiming at, or depending upon, an exclusively denominational support, it has sought the ordinary channels of magazine circulation, resting on its merits for its support. It has already reached a very widely-scattered constituency, and for humanity, width of sympathies, and business-like directness of style, leaves little to be desired in its management. The Council regret only that a larger space is not devoted to theological and denominational matter, and believe that, once established, the editor will fulfil in this respect, the expectations of the Unitarian public. The Council congratulates the Conference upon the successful start of the *Old and New*, and the American Unitarian Association upon the prudence and wisdom, united with generosity, with which it has supported the undertaking. No pains should be spared to give this magazine the utmost furtherance. Under any circumstances, we need just such a broad and popular organ of our practical thought; and the share, small as it is, of theological and denominational matter, which, through this magazine, finds its way, on the more popular current of literary criticism, narration and fiction, into the hitherto inaccessible minds of the

American people, independent of sect and neighborhood, is probably one of the most effective missionary agencies we are now working.

None the less, however, is a critical theological review wanted, if not wished. But probably a truce must be effected among the belligerent parties in the denomination before any such enterprise will become possible.

The *Religious Magazine and Monthly Review*, a private enterprise, not new but greatly improved and re-enforced, conducted with spirit and ability, and with no inconsiderable scholarship, has lately risen into importance, and by its devotional character and Christian earnestness, merits encouragement and support. Representing very distinctly a special party in the Unitarian body, it satisfies many who are conscientiously opposed to the policy the denomination, as a whole, has hitherto preferred. But the Council can see no reason why parties in our church should not have their organs, and can see no ground for speaking otherwise than approvingly of any sincere efforts made by any section of the body to demonstrate or emphasize its own convictions of truth. The *Religious Magazine* deserves the respect and gratitude of the whole body for its earnest and able advocacy of what many regard as vital necessities in our policy as a denomination. The truth cannot suffer in a body in which the most free and independent expressions of opinion are encouraged, and the most serious differences of sentiment are not permitted to compromise mutual respect and toleration.

Our two religious newspapers, the *Christian Register* and the *Liberal Christian*, are private enterprises, and have been of late, in enlarged and more costly forms, sustained by the spirit of a few friends to our cause in two distinct corporations, in Boston and New York, who have embarked considerable sums of money in their support, with no expectation of any other return than the missionary service rendered by these organs. The large amount of money which private benefactors of our cause have expended upon these newspapers has unfortunately led the denomination to regard them much as they would ordinary money-making corporations, and to forget that their proprietors have no other privilege than that of yearly making up the pecuniary deficiency in their support. They are just as distinctly missionary societies as the American Unitarian Association itself, with this difference only, that the cost of sustaining them falls upon a self-sacrificing and small minority of our people. For fifteen years, for instance, not to speak of the ten earlier years, a few

gentlemen in New York and Brooklyn have expended \$2,000 a year in supplementing the income from all other sources of the *Christian Inquirer* and its successor, the *Liberal Christian*. It is to be doubted whether, in any form, the same sum of money could have been as judiciously spent in missionary service. And doubtless the *Christian Register* could, if it pleased, exhibit quite as self-sacrificing an account of itself. Notice has been sent the Council of a motion to recommend that a thousand copies of each of these papers be gratuitously distributed among the reading-rooms, hotels, public libraries, colleges, and other public resorts, at the cost of the American Unitarian Association, and the Council commends the motion, when it shall come up, to the favorable regard of the Conference.

The dissemination of our denominational literature was never so general, so successful, and so manifestly useful as at this present moment. Since the last meeting of the Conference, the American Unitarian Association have been able to report that its book department sustained itself. This is an immense step gained at last. The Council are much impressed with the importance of maturing and invigorating plans by which the denominational literature can be brought more vividly to the eye and more tangibly into the hands of the public. They see no prospect of greatly increasing the sale of our books until the Unitarian denomination is represented in our chief cities by conspicuous buildings devoted to denominational purposes, where attractive collections of all our literature can be exposed in the most public way, and brought to the dull attention of a busy people. A comparatively obscure office for the sale of Unitarian books, recently opened by the American Unitarian Association in this city, shows that the chief purchasers are theological students and Orthodox ministers, and the number of works disposed of to these classes alone, indicates the wide sale and the great benefit which would wait upon a bolder and more public enterprise.

On the whole, the opportunities and prospects of Liberal Christianity were never more encouraging than now. The agitation and ferment in our own body over the question of a Statement of Faith, deplored by many, as it is, is really a necessary discussion, and indicates not the dissolution and decay, but the vitality and coherency of the denomination. It is only when political and ecclesiastical bodies are weak and in peril of existence, that differences among themselves are suppressed and forgotten. The Unitarian body is strong enough in the

secret sympathy and growing love of a reasonable faith which yearns towards it in millions of American minds to make no mystery of its internal disputes and varieties of opinion. Is it not strong enough in its consciousness of Christian loyalty to tolerate a great freedom of discussion and conviction touching the grounds of this allegiance?

It ought, at any rate, not to be forgotten that the two chief parties in our body are mainly contending whether the Christ of God or the Spirit of God is the head-spring of divine guidance — a question which, in all ages, has been answered differently by equally pious minds and equally good Christians, and which, so long as the God who is back of both Spirit and Christ is not denied, ought not to be considered fatal to union and peace. No denomination that has not some controversy less religious than this to disgrace and divide it, ought to be alarmed for its condition and prospects! Yet it is the duty of the Council to say that the awful privileges of perfect freedom which we have inherited as a denomination, carry most solemn and critical responsibilities with them. It has been our office and duty to unsettle the Christian mind of the world, because it was settled in error, and could only so be prepared to receive the truth as it is in Jesus. To bind and to loose is equally an Apostolic duty. But for every old bond of error we unloose, it is our duty to bind with new truth the souls we emancipate. We must not leave in nakedness those from whom we tear garments too small or too coarse or too soiled for further wear. No Christian body has deeper obligations than ours to show itself Christian in deed and in truth by a living piety, a fervent zeal, a profound reverence for God and duty, and a close imitation of Jesus Christ; none, to clear up at the earliest moment the indefiniteness of the path which the smoke of the great battle for freedom has obscured or trampled out. Only let us not make a false survey, and lay down an imaginary road over an unexplored country, or sell for roadway what is still under water, and ever may be. The denomination seems agreed in two things, — its loyalty to Jesus Christ, and its determination to maintain the unfettered exercise of the right of private judgment. It is determined to be a distinctly Christian body and a distinctly free body. Some put the first intention foremost, and some put the last; but none reject either of the two. It is important for the majority in this body to treat its minority with the utmost courtesy and charity. If any way can be found which, not compromising our freedom, can better satisfy those among us who



think our Christian basis not sound in statement, however sound in fact, it is our duty to consider and adopt it. If, on the other hand, we cannot make the expression of our faith wholly satisfactory to the minority without offending the convictions and consciences of the majority, is it not their duty as good Christians and good Unitarians to submit to the imperfect statement we are able to agree in, taking advantage of that conscience-clause which we rarely appreciate when it is only others that need its protection? The Council can only earnestly pray that the spirit of Christ may rule over our discussion of the only torturing question in our denominational heart, and that self-control, sympathy, respect for others' rights, and a patient faith in the ultimate triumph of truth, may illustrate our Fourth Session as a National Conference.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

HENRY W. BELLOWS,

*Chairman of the Council.*

On motion of Rev. John D. Wells, Secretary, Rev. James Henry Wiggin and Mr. George H. Ellis were appointed Assistant Secretaries, *pro tem*.

On motion of Hon. Geo. B. Emerson, the Report of the Council was accepted.

The following communication was received and read:—

POST OFFICE, NEW YORK, October 19, 1870.

REV. JOHN D. WELLS, Secretary.

Sir: General P. H. Jones, the Postmaster, having learned of your proposed meeting in this city, at the Church of the Messiah during the present week, he has directed me to afford the members of your 'convention postal facilities in the collection and delivery of letters.

The Postmaster trusts that the facilities thus afforded may prove satisfactory and acceptable.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully,

B. T. MORGAN,

*Superintendent City Delivery.*



Rev. A. D. Wheeler, D. D., of Topsham, Maine, read the following

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE MAINE CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN CHURCHES.

This report will be as brief as a simple statement of the facts in regard to the field of missionary operations in Maine, the present condition of our churches, and the work accomplished, will allow.

The field is large; being nearly equal in territory to that of the five other New England States combined. It extends from the latitude of Portsmouth beyond that of Quebec. Our churches, comparatively few in number, are scattered at various intervals over almost the entire settled portions. The distance by the most direct route, between Kennebunk and Houlton, is but little less than three hundred miles, and about sixty miles of this distance must be travelled by stage. The distance along the coast to Eastport and Calais is not very different. Of course it is utterly impracticable to hold as frequent meetings of the Maine Conference, as of those comprised within narrower limits; and the pastors of our churches are unable to have as frequent intercourse with one another; and whenever they do meet, it must be, in most cases, at considerable expense both of time and money. For the same reason, our missionary work, though much of it is pleasant and agreeable, is often attended with fatigue and exposure, of which the remembrance is always preferable to the endurance.

Most of our established societies are in the cities and larger towns, and are in general self-sustaining, though some have needed assistance, especially at the beginning. The liberal element throughout the State is large and increasing, though but partially organized, and though but a small portion of it is avowedly Unitarian. Indeed but little is known of Unitarianism, distinctively so called, outside of the communities in which it is preached; and misrepresentations and misapprehensions in regard to it are everywhere common. Large numbers are ready to accept it, as soon as they hear and know what it is; and then it is not unusual to be told that they had always been Unitarians, without being aware of the fact. There are some who are avowedly such in almost every community. There are more, perhaps, who call themselves Universalists, because Universalist preachers have more frequently been among them, and Univer-

salist papers have a wider circulation. There are some of the Christian connections. There are many Spiritualists, and those who call themselves by other names or no name at all. But the prevailing sentiment is apparently that of dissatisfaction with Orthodoxy in all its forms, rather than that of a sincere attachment to any form of a liberal faith. This dissatisfaction with Orthodox preaching, and the absence of any other which is able to satisfy the wants of intelligent people, tends, naturally, to religious indifference, and to the neglect of all religious institutions. A single instance will serve as an illustration. In a village containing a population of 1,500 or 2,000 people, and two so-called evangelical churches, the seat also of a literary institution of considerable note and numbers, it is stated, on good authority, that only three hundred ordinarily attend worship on the Sabbath. What the people need is a different style of preaching, and a more truly evangelical doctrine. Give them these, and they will soon become interested, and the churches will be filled.

One great obstacle in the way of establishing Liberal Societies in the smaller towns and communities is the number of other societies already existing. In almost every town or plantation, no matter how small or how poor, will be found those belonging to three or four different denominations; and each must have its own minister. All combined would hardly be able to provide a competent support for one; and of course it is utterly impossible for either to do it alone. This condition of things has rendered it necessary to build union churches—that is, churches owned in common by different denominations,—and to give to the minister a circuit of three or four adjacent towns where each will preach in his turn on successive Sundays. There is no use in discussing the advantages or disadvantages of this system, since, under the circumstances, no other is practicable. We can come into this arrangement, and take our turn in the use of these churches with the rest. We have done it already to a considerable extent, and almost invariably have had larger and apparently more interested audiences than preachers of any other class. There are scores if not hundreds of these union churches, scattered all over the State. Indeed, in many sections of the State it is a rare thing to find any other. We could avail ourselves of a large proportion of them, if we had enough of the right kind of men to send to them, and money enough to aid them in starting. By doing this, it seems altogether probable that we could soon acquire a

predominating influence over an extensive region where now we have little or none.

There are yet some important places, where no societies of our faith exist, and where it is hoped they may soon be established and become self-supporting. But to ensure success, the movement in each should be made under the most favorable circumstances. We merely wait our opportunity.

Such is our field of labor, and such is the nature of the work to be accomplished and of the difficulties to be encountered.

At present, there are twenty-two societies in the State already formed or in the process of formation. Of this number five date their origin in the last century, and eight within the last seven years; fourteen are able to support preaching without external aid; six are at this time without permanent ministers; three have no houses of worship; one is building a church, and has its exterior nearly completed; and *one* is raising funds for the same purpose, having \$3,000 or more, already secured.

The Secretary of this Conference, during the past year, has had the aid for a short period of ten different persons or missionaries; one a layman employed on several occasions; six from the Divinity School at Cambridge during their summer vacation, and three clergymen not in charge of parishes, for several Sundays each.

The results of the year's work may be stated thus:—

One church erected with the prospect of being soon completed.

One minister installed over the excellent society in Kennebunk.

One ordained over the young and vigorous society at Houlton.

One invited to the regenerated and now self-sustaining society at Castine; his salary provided for and a parsonage purchased, to be occupied free of rent.

The society at Thomaston so far revived as to have raised a considerable sum for the support of preaching; but not yet enough for the repair of its church.

That at Standish so far revived as to be able to raise a much larger sum both for the support of preaching and for the purpose of repairs; about \$1,000 in all.

Three new societies; two already organized, and another about to be organized in the important towns of Gorham, Bucksport and Dover; one having a church already at command, another providing means to erect one, and all promising well in the future.

Five missionary stations where services are held regularly in union churches every fourth week, and where those who attend them defray the whole or a part of the expense.

And in addition to these, *fifteen* other places which have been visited more or less frequently by myself and others; making twenty-five different places in all, in which missionary labors have been performed.

It is thought by some that these smaller places should be neglected, and no money or time expended upon them. But it should be remembered it is our duty to sow beside all waters, and that these are the rills which feed the larger streams. It may be true that they are of less consequence considered by themselves, but if all the sources become dry, where will be the river? In material things our cities and centres of business are supplied from the country; and just in proportion as this supply is cut off, the cities themselves will languish. It is the same in spiritual things. Many of our once flourishing societies in Maine have been weakened and eventually have ceased to exist, from this very cause. Business changes in many instances have seriously affected the growth of societies. By removal or other causes, their most substantial members are taken away, and none come in to supply their place. What else could they do but expire? Our larger churches need a back country to support them as well as our larger towns. And the sower who goes forth to sow, must not be disappointed or surprised if some seeds fall by the wayside, or in stony places or among thorns, for others may fall upon good ground and bring forth fruit, thirty or sixty or a hundred fold. Jesus himself gathered his disciples and taught them in the obscure villages and along the highways and by-ways of Judea and the surrounding provinces, as well as in the larger cities; and his parting command was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

The Maine Conference, as such, has taken no action in regard to the question of a Statement of Faith. Individual churches are present by their delegates, and if deemed necessary, will speak and act for them, themselves. There can be but little doubt, however, that all would regard it as a calamity, if by any act or omission of this body, when so much work has been already accomplished, and so much more remains to be done, we should weaken our forces, and cease to work harmoniously together.

Respectfully submitted,

A. D. WHEELER, *Secretary.*



Rev. J. F. Lovering, of Concord, N. H., read the following

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

The New Hampshire Unitarian Association was organized Feb. 25, 1863. It is the oldest of our Local Conferences. It includes sixteen societies. Its meetings are at the call of its officers. The last was held in June, at East Wilton; where a thriving society has been organized, and a neat church edifice built within a year and a half. With one, or possibly two exceptions, every society can be spoken of as in a flourishing condition; and in one instance, that of Manchester, under the pastorate of Rev. Chas. B. Ferry, there is a very emphatic promise of extended usefulness and increase:

Our work of instituting societies in New Hampshire is by no means completed, while there may be need of fostering with timely care societies already existing, which from the nature of things are in need of assistance. There is large hope of bringing together thriving societies in certain large and growing communities where no special missionary effort has been made, yet where success seems inevitable, if two conditions can be met. I mean two conditions aside from the encouragement which the American Unitarian Association, or the wise council of our ministry, can give.

The first condition concerns politics. New Hampshire, more than any other New England State, has very sharp social divisions on account of political differences. The only way such divisions can be done away with is by a larger and more generous religious culture. And it is a remarkable fact that those of special prominence as political leaders in the State, are favorably inclined to our Unitarian thought and faith.

They catch the breath of our mountains in its fresh, vigorous, liberty-loving spirit. I do not say that all such are distinctively Unitarians. In many instances they have but a vague idea of what our Unitarianism is. Of one thing they are satisfied,—that the prevailing theology is repugnant to them, and that they can have no sympathy with the spirit pervading the popular churches. So far as representative minds are concerned, I know this to be the fact. And throughout the communities outlying our cities and larger villages, I have found a most hearty, cordial, grateful welcome given to our Unitarian Christian faith. But we need to have it understood in every community in New



Hampshire where any missionary work is projected, that the minister is not stump orator ; that whatever eulogium he may utter concerning the politics of heaven, he shall leave the political partisanship of earth for week-day labor. With the broadest and most generous concession to the minister's right to think and vote as his reason and conscience dictate on public questions, and with no desire to prohibit the discussion of the underlying principles involved, there is a repugnance amounting to a just abhorrence of what is known as political preaching.

Another condition of much graver and more generally acknowledged importance is some distinct and authoritative statement concerning the principles of our faith. Men and women will not take up Unitarianism blindfolded. They demand to know what it has done and what it means. While there are none who care to be trammelled by a creed which shall define the limits of faith and prescribe a course of thought, outside of which it cannot be orthodox to wander, no one is content to take up with a faith which offers no positive declaration of truth, and which is utterly without purpose or plan.

Give to the missionary the right to say in the name of the National Conference of Unitarian churches that as a denomination we occupy an unequivocal Christian position, with no Ninth Article to stultify the only authorized expression of Christian faith we have ; set up a standard for the people under which your enlisting officers can receive recruits ; and I am convinced that there are in every community throughout New Hampshire, men and women who would gladly assume our name and work in our cause.

J. F. LOVERING, *Secretary*.

Rev. George L. Chaney, of Hollis Street Church, Boston, read the following

#### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE SUFFOLK CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

The Suffolk Conference was formed in December, 1866, in accordance with the recommendation of the National Conference held in Syracuse the preceding October. It includes nineteen (19) churches, which are represented in the Conference by their

respective ministers and six lay delegates. The following named churches belong to the Conference:—

Arlington St. Church, Boston,  
 Church in Brattle Square, Boston.  
 Church of the Disciples, Boston.  
 Church of the Unity, Boston.  
 Church in North Chelsea.  
 Church of the Good Samaritan, Boston.  
 First Congregational Church, Boston.  
 First Unitarian Society in Chelsea.  
 Hollis St. Church, Boston.  
 Hanover St. Chapel, Boston.  
 Hawes Place Church, So. Boston.  
 New North Church, Boston.  
 Pitts St. Chapel, Boston.  
 So. Congregational Church, Boston.  
 Warren St. Chapel, Boston.  
 Washington Village Chapel, Boston.  
 New South Free Church, Boston.  
 Church of the Redeemer, Boston.  
 Church of Our Father, East Boston.

In answer to the inquiry of the Secretary of the National Conference as to the "condition and working" of the Suffolk Conference, we are tempted to reply in the words of the cook, who being asked the state of the eggs she was boiling, answered that "they had been boiling three hours and were not soft yet." We have kept our churches in a state of ebullition for four years, and we do not yet discern any sign of softening.

Excellent people in the separate churches have been brought together through the influence of the Conference, but the churches themselves resist all attempts hitherto tried to mass and attach them.

We believe that our meetings, and the humane enterprises we have encouraged, have quickened men and women in all the churches; and these people conferring and working together have reaped their reward in a new access of life and zeal. So far as they have been able to infuse their spirit into the separate churches to which they belong, these churches have profited by our Conference; but it remains a lamentable confession that our Conference has not given to its churches that sense of having one faith, one work and one destiny, which would do much to increase our effectiveness as a denomination, and which may fairly be attempted by a Local Conference.

Perhaps there is something in the manner of our working which has occasioned this result. Perhaps we have given too little heed to the churches as such, and, taking their good estate for granted, have aimed too directly at the evils in the world at large. We have had no doubt that the mission of the Christian Church was to replace these evils with good. Given nineteen Christian churches with their ministers, church buildings, chapels, and varied congregations: and it would seem that there was nothing to do but to unite them in their common work of curing evil and supplying good. With this view we began by appointing experienced people upon special committees, and intrusted to them the duty of presenting reports upon such subjects as — “Our duty to the sick and lonely in our Public Institutions and to vagrant children in the streets.”

We looked at the vast company of unchurched and unfriended people in the great city, and asked ourselves what we could do for them. “Ask me to preach to them in the theatre,” said our brother Hepworth, and we asked him, and many others after him; and for four years we have maintained a course of Sunday evening services in the Boston Theatre. Not satisfied with preaching to the people, we invited them to unite with us in an open meeting for conversation upon religious subjects; and a series of conference meetings was held during one season in Horticultural Hall. Five hundred people were present at each of these meetings.

These undertakings were new at the time. They received the criticism and suspicion which always attend the use of new methods. “How will these things benefit the churches which are your especial charge?” it was asked. “Will they not injure the church with diversion from its sober and decent ways?” After four years of trial we think most people will agree that the theatre meetings have not injured the churches. Perhaps most people will agree that they have not done the churches, as such, much good. But their defence lies in what they have done for the people who attended them. We have at least shown the unchurched public that our churches are not satisfied to stand apart from them, and are willing to go more than half-way to meet and help them. But we did not limit our hospitality to the hall and theatre. We prepared a tabular view of all our churches and chapels, and scattered it among the audience. We gave the people full information of our church location, and meetings, and the residence of the ministers; and cordially invited them to accept the services of both church and

minister. We went further. We started a Suffolk Union for Christian Work. We urged them to join it, and offered our assistance in conducting it.

But the simultaneous revival of the "Young Men's Christian Union," appealing to the same people for support, made it expedient to let the Suffolk Union stand in abeyance, until its larger plan should be attained by the expanding spirit and methods of the Young Men's Union. The work of the Suffolk Union having been mainly performed by members of the Conference, it is fair to include their doings in their report. These consist of the opening, for a season, of a room for social meeting in the centre of the city, and during one summer the maintenance of an afternoon service of devotion and preaching in Faneuil Hall. Under the superintendence of the section upon education, a selection of the tracts of the Ladies' Sanitary Commission of London was made and adapted to use in Boston. These tracts were scattered about the city. The section upon amusements, after starting free entertainments of a religious character in several of our chapels, petitioned the city for free concerts for the people to be given in the Music Hall. Their petitions, signed by influential citizens, was granted, and the people met in Music Hall and enjoyed the organ, and the varied singing which accompanied it.

One of the subjects which has received the earnest attention of members of the Conference is Industrial Education. A committee appointed for the purpose made an extensive study of the subject, and finally petitioned the city government for the enforcement of the Industrial Education already recognized as a part of our Public School System, and its enlargement. As the result of this movement, the girls in our public schools will hereafter graduate well-taught in sewing and cutting, and a more practical character will be given to the instruction in drawing. The schools for news-boys were established partly in response to our petition.

We have given to the reform in prison discipline our best interest and aid. The problem of healthy homes for the working people has employed the wit and wisdom of some of our members with promise of tangible results.

It will be seen that in the labors of the Conference thus briefly sketched, there has been an attempt to advance by the straight line upon the evils in our community.

And yet we have not forgotten the necessity of ministering to the peculiar life of the church. "How to interest the young in



its labor"; "Meetings for religious Conference"; "Hospitality in our churches to strangers who come to the city"; "Lay preaching"; "New church enterprises in our neighborhood,"—all these subjects have been carefully discussed and voted upon.

During one season there was a meeting for devotion in some one of our churches every day in the week. We have systematized the charitable work of the churches by districting the city and assigning a distinct section to each church.

We have aided the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association in raising money, and presenting his missionary enterprises to the public. This list of our doings may suffice for a report of the working of the Conference. It may seem to be the record of a grand success. But we do not present it as such. On the contrary, we are not satisfied with the result of our working. Its weakness lies in the fact that it is not the working of all the churches, each and all well-informed and heartily interested in these doings. Much of our report will be as new to the delegates from our own churches as to those from other Conferences.

It seems impossible, where churches are socially distinct and traditionally separate, especially where their members are subject to the numberless engagements of city-life, to associate them in unions which summon their members to frequent meetings, and continuous labors.

The utmost we have attained is the fellowship and co-operation of a few kindred souls out of all the churches. Perhaps the utmost we can hope in a large city, is an increase in the number of such consulting and agreeing individuals. But if good service to the world is done, and we are blessed in doing it in the future, as we have been in the past, we shall gladly respond, Mr. Secretary, to your invitation to account for ourselves.

GEORGE L. CHANEY, *Secretary*.

Rev. Frederic Hinckley, of Harrison Square, Dorchester District, Boston, read the following

#### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NORFOLK CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

Among the earliest to respond to the recommendation of the National Conference touching the organization of Local Confer-



ences, were the Unitarian churches of Norfolk County, Mass. Thirteen of these churches came together, by their pastors and lay delegates, Dec 6, 1866, and formed the "Norfolk Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches"; adopting with some slight modifications, the Constitution suggested by the Committee of the National Council. To-day there are in the fellowship of the Conference twenty-five churches or societies, as follows:—

The First Parish, *Boston, Dorchester District*, Rev. Nathaniel Hall.

The First Religious Society, *Boston Highlands*, Rev. George Putnam, D. D.

The Third Religious Society, *Boston, Dorchester District*, Rev. T. J. Mumford.

The Mt. Pleasant Congregational Church, *Boston Highlands*.

The Third Unitarian Society, *Boston, Harrison Square*.

The Church of the Unity, *Boston, Neponset*.

The First Parish, *Brookline*, Rev. Frederic H. Hedge, D. D.

The First Congregational Parish, *Canton*, Rev. George F. Piper.

The First Parish, *Dedham*, Rev. Geo. M. Folsom.

The Third Parish, *West Dedham*, Rev. Elisha Gifford.

The First Parish, *Dover*, Rev. Calvin S. Locke.

The Second Congregational Society, *Hyde Park*, Rev. Francis C. Williams.

The First Congregational Society, *Jamaica Plain*, Rev. James W. Thompson, D. D.

The First Congregational Parish, *Medfield*, Rev. James H. Wigin.

The Liberal Christian Society, *West Medway*.

The First Congregational Society, *Milton*, Rev. John H. Morison, D. D.

The South Parish, *South Natick*, Rev. Horatio Alger.

The First Congregational Society, *Needham* and *Grantville*, Rev. Albert B. Vorse.

The First Congregational Society, *Quincy*, Rev. John D. Wells.

The First Unitarian Society, *Randolph*.

The First Congregational Parish, *West Roxbury*, Rev. Augustus M. Haskell.

The First Congregational Society, *Sharon*.

The First Congregational Church, *Sherborn*, Rev. William Brown.

The First Congregational Society, *Walpole*, Rev. William B. Smith.

The Universalist Church in *Boston Highlands* and that in *South Dedham* have also cordially acted with us, through their pastors, and sometimes by lay delegates; the former having each read essays at our meetings and participated freely in our discussions.

During the four years of its existence, the Conference has met thirteen (13) times. At each of these meetings, one or more essays have been presented, followed by full discussion on some topic of religious, moral, or practical and financial bearing. In the selection of subjects for consideration or action, we have endeavored to keep in view all the purposes for which the Conference was formed. Those purposes, as expressed in the Constitution, adopted by us, in common, I suppose, with most of the other Local Conferences, are three: —

I. "To promote the Religious Life and Mutual Sympathy of the Churches";

II. "To enable them to co-operate in Missionary Work"; and

III. "In raising Funds for various Christian purposes."

From the circular of the National Council, accompanying the constitution, by them recommended, and adopted by the Conferences, it appears that this statement concerning the raising of funds was designed to have special, though, of course, not exclusive, application to the annual contribution for the American Unitarian Association.

How far has our Conference been able to accomplish these several purposes? The time properly allotted to these reports permits only the briefest possible reply. As before remarked, they have been all kept in view.

So far as Religious Life, — whether considered individually as a personal experience, or collectively as in the activity of a church, — so far as this is to be promoted by clear thought of its nature, origin, agencies and manifestations, the direct attention which has been given to this subject, in both directions, in carefully prepared papers and in earnest discussions, cannot have failed of doing something for the accomplishment of the desired result. So far as this life, in individual or church, may be quickened by contact with it in another, our very coming together, in its interest, and for the purpose of expressing and increasing it, could not do otherwise than make it more intense and efficient. In the very nature of the case, however,

this result is to be evidenced more in the personal consciousness and in the individual church than by any general demonstration before the eyes of the Conference at large.

That mutual sympathy of the churches (another branch of the first purpose) has been promoted by the action of the Conference, we are also very confident. The evidence of this is very open and palpable. It is seen in the constantly increasing interest of its meetings, the regularity with which nearly every church in its connection is represented, the large delegations attending from many of them, and the hearty expressions of satisfaction at the close. Indeed, there can be no surer method of increasing acquaintance and good fellowship, than this practice of all the churches by ever-changing delegations, visiting one of their number in succession, and at brief intervals. Still better, let each church, in turn, invite the other churches to meet with itself, throwing heart and home open with generous hospitality, and it shall find at once its own interest deepened and its sympathies enlarged. In our own experience, the hospitality has not been wanting, and the increased sympathy is evident.

The second purpose sought by the organization of the Local Conference, is co-operation of the churches in missionary work. For this work our own field is probably more limited than that of any other Conference. Yet it has not been without opportunities. Nor have these been neglected. There are twenty-five towns in the territory covered by our operations. Four years ago, fourteen of them had each a flourishing Unitarian church, several of them more than one. Four others were provided with churches of the Universalist faith. The towns of Sharon and Needham had church edifices, but no stated worship. These have since been opened, and services are regularly maintained. The latter is connected with Grantville, where services were some time since commenced, both being now in charge of the same minister. In Hyde Park, a new and rapidly growing town, on the line of the Hartford and Erie Railroad, services were commenced by ministers of the Conference in the summer of 1867, resulting in the formation of a society now established and flourishing. In the spring and summer of last year, meetings were held in West Medway and Randolph, and are still continued, being almost entirely sustained by the subscriptions of the people. There remain but two towns unprovided for; and one (if not both) of these, is at such short distance from

the Unitarian church in the next town, that its necessities in this respect cannot be considered very urgent.

It should also be added, that, in connection with the preaching commenced last year in Randolph and West Medway, one or two persons, students of the Divinity School, were employed several weeks, visiting in these and the neighboring towns, selling books, distributing tracts, and obtaining information as to the condition and needs of the people, and the best methods of supply.

In this work, as in that before spoken of, we have had the cordial co-operation and the efficient support of the American Unitarian Association.

There is a kind of mission work, including works of charity, sympathy, and helpfulness in every way, confined to the narrower field of town and village life, which we have left to, and enjoined upon, the individual churches. Two, if not more, of our meetings, have been largely taken up by earnest discussions as to the best methods of organizing the parish for this work.

There remains the answer to the question, What has the Conference done in the work of "raising funds"? Our experience has clearly proved that the Local Conference may be made the efficient and sufficient agent for this work. It furnishes the ready, practical answer to the question, so perpetually, so anxiously put: "By what method shall we raise the necessary money for our denominational purposes?" Here is the method already in our hands. Here is the machinery wherewith to work out the result. Like all machinery, its use has to be learned. Its parts may need to be re-adjusted. The best results are to be had only after repeated and long-continued experiment. But, regarding these conditions, and fulfilling them, the result will at last appear.

Let us illustrate this by our own action in behalf of the American Unitarian Association — the leading object of interest in this connection. Last year the officers of the various Conferences, in dividing up the \$100,000 desired for that Association, assigned \$10,000 of it as the portion of the Norfolk Conference.\* As soon as the Secretary of the Association had prepared his circulars, the Secretary of the Conference took a sufficient number of them for its churches, appended to each of them a statement

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\* It was found, on examination, that the contributions of the previous year fell short of that amount by nearly \$2,300.



of the amount assigned, the amount raised the previous year, the percentage of increase necessary to make up the deficiency, together with the particular contribution of the church addressed, or, if a non-contributor, the statement of that fact; closing with an earnest, but courteous, request for their best endeavors in response. These circulars were then sent to the minister and two or three of the leading laymen, and sometimes laywomen, of each church. The subject had also occupied the attention of the Conference at its early fall meeting. The result appears in the fact that the contribution of \$7,744.19 in 1868 became in 1869, \$9,129.20. Not quite up to the desired point, but certainly holding out strong encouragement for a renewed effort the present year to complete the desired amount.

For the successful working out of this method of contribution through the Conferences, three things are requisite: —

First, the co-operation of all the Local Conferences through their secretaries and other officers. By these the amount desired should be carefully apportioned, in a manner at once equitable and feasible; just and fair to all, and likely to be obtained. If the apportionment of one year is found not to answer these conditions, let it be re-adjusted till it is both fair and possible.

Second, efficient action on the part of the officers of each Local Conference, in making a like equitable and feasible apportionment among the churches, in explaining and commending the measure at the meeting preceding the day of contribution; and on the part of its secretary, particularly, in accompanying the general circular by his own official appeal to the ministers and laymen to whom those circulars are addressed.

Third, persistent following up of the method, year after year, till patient working shall have brought success, — the establishment of a systematic habit of giving on the part of each society, — giving, not irregularly, now profusely, now niggardly, now not at all; but according to its means, uniformly, constantly, and therefore reliably.

All this, of course, has to do only with method. If it be said that behind method is disposition, or rather an indisposition, doubts and denials of the just claim, the Christian position of the Association, and of the general body of which it is the executive hand, keeping back contributions asked for, then the Local Conference furnishes an opportunity for the frank expression of the doubt, the thorough examination of the position, the justification or disapproval of the claim, — an oppor-



tunity more frequent and more extensive even than that which is sought so eagerly in this present National Conference.

In a similar manner to that before described, the churches of the Norfolk Conference have been called upon, last year and this, to contribute to the treasury of the Sunday School Society, on the second Sunday in May.

Six hundred dollars were also contributed in 1868, to a fair for the Boston School for the Ministry. This amount was sent to Charleston, S. C., for the purchase of palmetto and other work prepared by some of the poor of that city. These articles were sold at the fair for nearly one thousand dollars, of which six hundred and fifty were given to the school, and the balance to various deserving charities. Over five hundred dollars were also raised the following year, for the 'Students' Club House of the Divinity School at Cambridge.

In these, and in similar ways, has the Norfolk Conference sought, during the four years of its existence, to accomplish the purposes for which it was organized: to promote religious life, and increase Christian sympathy; to do mission work as it had opportunity; and to further the raising of funds for Christian purposes.

FREDERIC HINCKLEY, *Secretary*.

Rev. Dr. Bellows moved the appointment by the Chair of a business committee of five.

Rev. H. G. Spaulding said he had a resolution which he would offer as a substitute for the motion of Dr. Bellows, as follows:

*Resolved*, That a Committee of seven be appointed, representing as nearly as may be the existing differences of opinion, to report to the Conference, Thursday morning, a plan of action, if any be deemed expedient, respecting changes in the Preamble and Constitution, and the declaration of Unitarian principles or doctrines; and that all motions and resolutions concerning these matters of which notice has been given be referred to this Committee; — this Committee to be appointed during the intermission by the acting Chairman, assisted by Rev. Charles Lowe and Wm. B. Weeden, Esq.

After brief discussion by Rev. Messrs. Spaulding, J. B. Green, and J. D. Wells, Mr. Spaulding's substitute was withdrawn.

The motion of Dr. Bellows was then adopted, and the Chair announced the Committee, as follows: Rev. A. P. Putnam, Rev. E. E. Hale, Rev. J. H. Heywood, Rev. H. G. Spaulding, Mr. William B. Weeden.

Mr. Spaulding's motion was then renewed.

After brief discussion by Rev. Messrs. A. P. Putman, G. H. Hepworth, E. E. Hale, and others, on motion of Richard Warren, E-q., it was voted, 128 to 116, to lay Mr. Spaulding's resolution upon the table.

Rev. C. H. Brigham, from the Committee on nomination of a temporary chairman, reported the name of Hon. Henry Chapin, of Worcester, Mass., President of the American Unitarian Association, for that office.

The Report was accepted, and Mr. Chapin was unanimously elected.

Rev. Dr. Bellows stated that a luncheon had been provided for the delegates in the ante-room of the Church, and on motion of Mr. Warren, the Conference, at 12½ o'clock, took a recess for one hour.

### WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Conference re-assembled at 1.30 P. M., Hon. Henry Chapin, of Worcester, Mass., in the chair.

The exercises were commenced by the singing of one verse of the hymn, "The Morning Light is Breaking."

Prayer was offered by Rev. R. R. Shippen, of Worcester.

### ADDRESS OF HON. HENRY CHAPIN.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: It would be unjust to you and myself for me to assume the duties of this responsible position without one word of explanation.

The decision to which the Convention has come, is to me a source of profound regret and unmitigated astonishment. It has been my fate to attend some political conventions; but I never knew until this time that a man who has been called upon to preside over such an audience as this should not know something about it before eleven o'clock in the forenoon; and the fact that he occupies a position in connection with another Christian Association I supposed would have been a sufficient guarantee against being called upon to take any action here; because although I have been connected with that Association but a few months, I have been unable to detect anything in the management of it which might give countenance to something which I have had the fortune to read in the newspapers. When I reflect

upon the character of the audience that I see before me, and upon the men who have been called upon to occupy this position; when I remember those friends now sleeping, and know with what power and eloquence they performed the duties which devolved upon them, it is perfectly natural that I should feel a shrinking in attempting to follow in their steps.

But some one must perform this duty. Mr. Partridge, the president, this forenoon, *would* not; Governor Padelford *would* not; and Mr. Curtis *could* not. I have come all the way from Massachusetts here, and am selected for the purpose. It is not the first time that Massachusetts — when there have been symptoms of rebellion — has been obliged to take the field.

After having listened to the excellent and able report of the committee this morning, and seen the list of gentlemen who have the business of this Conference in charge, I see that there is very little for me to do, except to endeavor to keep this Conference in order. I shall, of course, crave your aid and assistance in endeavoring to do my duty. It is my desire to give to every member every proper opportunity for the expression of his views, and to deal fairly and impartially with all.

Any one who may have read the newspapers within the last few weeks will have arrived at the suspicion that there is some little difference of opinion among the gentlemen who are collected here, and might even suppose — if he didn't know the elements with which he was dealing — that there was something very serious involved in it — that there is danger ahead! I met an Orthodox minister, a friend of mine, yesterday, who said to me: "I shall be very anxious to hear from that Convention." I have no doubt of it. The eyes of the world are upon us. We are the heretics of the heretics, you know, in the religious world, and we must bear ourselves in such a way as to do justice to our principles. We need have no great fear that the persons whom I see before me are going to do anything that is dangerous to the cause of religion or to the Unitarian denomination. The Apostles sometimes used great freedom of speech; so do our Unitarian brethren; because they think, perhaps, that some brother is to be blamed. I have no doubt, however, that when all is over, they will all go their way in the same spirit as the Apostles did — going about doing good according to their power.

Now, this fact that other denominations are looking upon us, is one thing which you ought to bear in mind. When the armies of Cyrus were gathered about the walls of Jerusalem, and were quiet, the Jews, it is said, quarrelled among them-

selves; but the moment the army advanced they stood shoulder to shoulder. So must it be with us. On a later occasion, before the first overt act of rebellion was committed, various differences existed among the men of the free States, and how many are there not who supposed that the moment an overt act was committed, there would be riot and bloodshed in the Northern States themselves; and yet, at the first gunshot signal from Sumter, every man on this side of Mason and Dixon's line felt that the time for discussions among us of the North was at an end; and men, who perhaps had long been personal enemies, went forth, side by side, to battle in a common cause for victory.

We may here present our views as honest men, frankly, freely, — severely, if you will, — but with an abounding charity, and then go away from here to do our work — as I have no doubt we shall — of promoting “Peace on earth and good will to men.”

Rev. E. E. Hale, for the Committee on Business, reported — that they recommend that the remaining Local Conference Reports shall be read this afternoon; and that if there is any time before four o'clock, any resolutions submitted in these reports shall be considered; and that the evening shall be given, first, to Rev. G. H. Hepworth's report on theatre meetings, with any discussion that may arise on it; and, second, to the report of the Committee on our relations with other Christian denominations, to be introduced by Mr. Hale. Adopted.

Rev. George Batchelor of Salem, read the following

#### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ESSEX COUNTY CONFERENCE OF LIBERAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

The following report, having been presented to the Essex Conference for correction and approval, is, by a vote of the Conference, now offered as a fair representation of the work, spirit, and principles of that body.

The Essex Conference of Liberal Christian Churches is composed of seventeen societies, of which at the request of your Council I give the names, adding also the date of organization: North Parish Church and Society, N. Andover, 1645; First Parish, Beverly, 1667; Unitarian Congregational Society, Danvers, 1865; First Parish, Gloucester, 1642; First Parish, Haverhill, 1645; Liberal Christian Society, Ipswich, 1867; First Unitarian Society, Lawrence, 1847; Second Congrega-



tional Society, Lynn, 1822; First Congregational Society, Lynnfield Centre, 1715; Second Congregational Society, Marblehead, 1716; First Religious Society, Newburyport, 1725; First Unitarian Church, Peabody, 1825; First Congregational Society, Salem, 1629; Second Church, Salem, 1717; North Church, Salem, 1772; Independent Congregational Church, in Barton Square, Salem, 1824; Unitarian Society, Swampscott, 1868.

From this list it appears that of the seventeen societies forming our body, five were founded in the seventeenth century, five in the eighteenth century, seven in the nineteenth century, and only four in the last twenty-five years. In such a circle of ancient churches, the work of a Local Conference, so recently formed, must be quite unlike that to be done in a new community. Its missionary work does not much affect the statistics of the denomination. Happily that is not the safest test of prosperous working. In a county where churches are so closely packed, new churches can seldom be formed without detriment to religion. Since the organization of the Conference, however, occasional preaching has been maintained in seven different places. As a direct result, one new church has become prosperous and self-supporting, one old church has been upheld until it could renew its prosperity and was saved by the sympathy of sister churches; and, most important of all, several ancient churches, which four years ago were wavering or declining, are now strong and resolute; and there is not within the limits of our Conference one church which is not solidly established, and scarcely one that is not growing in numbers and influence. Debts have been paid, improvements have been made, new needs discovered and provided for, until a general air of thrift and prosperity pervades the body.

In time there will come the ability as well as the desire to enlarge the resources of those who are at the outposts of religious civilization. The contributions to the funds of the American Unitarian Association have been made cheerfully, and are not disproportioned to the relative means of the Conference.

It is not easy to detect the immediate action of specific remedies, but the coincidence between this effort at co-operation and the uprising of the people is certainly remarkable.

The Conference discharges an important function as an educator of the people. The parishes formerly stood aloof from each other, ignorant and careless concerning the opinions, methods; and prosperity of sister churches. There was neither harmony nor discord, but simple isolation. Now



all this is changed; men and women from all parts of the county, to the number of at least 1000, are more or less regular attendants of the meetings. They not only hear the sermons, essays, discussions, and reports; but mingle in social intercourse, exchange ideas, compare notes in friendly conversation, and so gain a larger idea of the possibilities of unity in diversity.

They have listened to sermons, addresses, and essays from Collyer, Gannett, Hale, Ware, Calthrop, Staples, Lowe, Briggs, and Brigham; besides ministers and laymen in our own churches. Matters theological, practical, and speculative have been discussed; such, for instance, as materialism in American life; the church; its worship; organization for work; church membership; Sunday-schools; creeds; woman's work in the ministry; missionary work at home and abroad; radicalism and conservatism; Christianity and free religion. There have been notable reports upon Noyes's Translation of the New Testament; upon the Cambridge Divinity School; and a series of admirable notes of practical labor, from the lady who is agent of the Conference.

Such varied questions have been discussed freely and fearlessly, with no detriment to the essential harmony of the body.

A plan was set on foot for raising \$25,000 for the endowment of a new professorship in the Cambridge Divinity School. The plan, however, found an easy fulfilment in the enterprise and sagacity of the President of the University, who found a worthy professor, and somewhere in the garrets of the University discovered the funds to support him. The Conference having been superseded in its larger plan, gladly contributed its share toward the support of students in the Divinity School, without remembering to ask their theological opinion. It has always manifested a quick sympathy for the schools which train our ministers, and a readiness to contribute for their support.

These associated churches are so variously constituted that the problem at the outset was to secure an organization which would easily include every member of our liberal body, whether Unitarian or not. It was perceived that a position of absolute independence must be maintained, in which we should be free from all "entangling alliances" with the National Conference or the American Unitarian Association. To this end a constitution was reported by Dr. Briggs, Mr. Beane, and Judge Newhall, of which this is the preamble: "Whereas, Christian union can never be effected by any doctrinal statement, but must be reached by

unity of the spirit and earnest co-operation in Christian work; therefore we," etc. Then follow the articles of organization.

This free organization has been jealously guarded until this time. Without it, we should fly in pieces at once; with it, we have proved that liberty and union agree, that there is no conflict between individuality and association, and that perfect independence is the best basis for hearty co-operation.

The record of the Conference has been throughout consistent with this fundamental principle of its life. Organized for Christian work, intended to promote Christian union, it has steadily resisted all attempts to impose limitations.

Two years since it proclaimed the right of every member of the National Conference freely to express his convictions on this floor, for whatever real or fancied grievance he claimed redress.

Last January, at the Peabody meeting, it was heartily "*Resolved*, 'That we shall always resist the establishment of any doctrinal test with all our power.'" Fidelity to this resolution is the ground of our being as a Conference in Essex County. When we desert that, we are at once dissolved as a body of churches associated for Christian fellowship and Christian work.

Little account has been made of a formal and uniform organization of the churches with effective discipline under which each shall take his orders and promise obedience. Compact organization implies surrender of individuality to such an extent that it has been found impossible to establish it in our Conference.

Our body is essentially democratic; and that there may be equality between us, it has been found advisable to make each meeting provide the substantial viands for its own entertainment; that we may visit churches that are poor without laying upon them a grievous burden, and may not offer the rich any occasion for ostentation.

Still more democratic was a recent excursion upon the Merri-mac, and meeting in the woods, which ministered to a harmony deeper than any theological sameness. Such annual festivities are likely to become permanent features of our Association.

To sum up the results of this local organization, we believe we have in it an illustration of perfect liberty resulting in real unity among members of an associate body, — a liberty which has in no wise diminished the willingness to co-operate with this larger body in all measures dictated by conscience and sound reason; or lessened the desire to further the ends of the American Unitarian Association in all matters of public utility.

There has been awakened a new interest in the truths of Unitarian Christianity, and more zeal for their diffusion. There is friendly intercourse between churches formerly estranged, and a better understanding of the grounds of spiritual unity with intellectual diversity. There is more and clearer knowledge concerning the aims and methods of our literature, educational facilities, and missionary work; and withal a deep conviction that they who work for the same ends belong together, and must stand shoulder to shoulder whatever their differences.

Out of this spontaneous union, with all its defects and deficiencies, there has come new life-blood to the churches, new courage to the workers, and a more assured confidence that the battle is ours, however long the conflict with ignorance and evil.

GEORGE BATCHELOR, *Secretary*.

To this report, by vote of the Conference, the following resolutions were appended:—

*Whereas*, The Unitarian churches in Essex County, differing widely as they do in theological opinion, are still associated in perfect harmony, and this harmony exists by virtue of the right guaranteed by this Conference to each of its members, to seek truth wherever he may find it, and to live up to it as God gives him grace: therefore,

*Resolved*, That this harmony ought not to be disturbed by any inquest into the theological belief of the churches, or the men and women composing them.

*Resolved*, That we hold the freedom in which we were created, and the sense of fellowship with all human aspiration after good, above pride of sect or ambition for influence and numbers, and that neither from fear of, or in deference to, any person or sect, will we consent to any dogmatic limitation of religious freedom.

A true copy of record.

GEORGE BATCHELOR, *Secretary*.

*Voted*, To accept this Report, and also the Reports of Local Conferences previously read.

On motion of Rev. Crawford Nightingale,

*Voted*, That speakers be requested to address the Conference from the front.

Rev. W. H. Fish, of South Scituate, read the following

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE PLYMOUTH AND BAY CONFERENCE.

The Plymouth and Bay Conference was organized in the Church of the First Parish of Hingham, on Tuesday, the fifth day of February, 1867, and consists of seventeen churches, all of which, excepting three, at Sandwich, Easton, and North Easton, are in Plymouth County. Most of these churches were planted by the original Pilgrim Fathers, or their immediate descendants, the one at Plymouth in the memorable year of 1620, and several others between that year and 1645. A large majority of them are from one hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty years old,—only one less than half a century. Of course, they were originally “Orthodox,” according to the type of Orthodoxy then generally prevailing in the Old Colony; and they have gradually become liberal in their theology and spirit, within the last century; and some of them, at least, seem to have been quickened into a new and more vigorous life, by the influence of the Conference. Before the Conference was organized, these churches seemed to be almost as much isolated from each other, as though they had no common faith or interest in religion; and but few of their members, a dozen miles apart, had any acquaintance with each other,—the result in a great degree of their being rarely called together by large public gatherings in the interest of our cause. But the meetings of the Conference have been as frequent as three and four times a year; and many usually attending them that were strangers, have become familiar and interested friends, and rejoice together in being mutual partakers of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ, and fellow-workers in advancing the kingdom of God on earth. And this has certainly been a great gain, not only to the individuals entering into such friendly and sacred relationship, but also to our common cause; and it is a very promising indication of our future. Going on as we have commenced, I think the next ten years will add much to our numerical and spiritual strength.

Our churches are generally self-supporting, and both able and willing to aid, as they do, our common national work by their annual contributions to the American Unitarian Association, or through some other channels open to them. They are not all rich, like our metropolitan churches, and other churches in great



business centres ; and so much of the former enterprise has gone from some places in the Old Colony, that our churches located in those places are not able to do for others what might reasonably be expected of them by those only familiar with their age and stability. Still they are generally able to do more than they are accustomed to do ; and this is no doubt the case with a majority of the churches of our denomination, — a chronic defect coming, I apprehend, partly, at least, from their not religiously appreciating, as they should, our sublime and precious faith, and the importance of extending it throughout the country and the world ; and partly from their not having been educated to give liberally for the support and diffusion of their own faith. And I am confident that however much we may need a Statement of Christian Faith, to satisfy the " Orthodox " and others that we are not infidels, as they called even Channing and his associates, not Pagans, not mere speculative philosophers, we need a statement of moral and religious obligation and duty much more ; for the most of us, at least, undoubtedly have more faith, or belief of some sort, in Christianity than we have of its spirit and working power. Our great lack is solid, substantial religion, — an inspired enthusiasm for God and humanity, — and, whatever else we may have, if we do not have this, we shall be comparatively powerless as a religious body.

The Plymouth and Bay Conference is not so favorably located as many of our Local Conferences are for missionary work, our seventeen churches occupying nearly all the ground easily accessible to us, that seems inviting and promising to our labors. Still, since the organization of the Conference, there have been occasional earnest calls upon it to supply destitute places with preaching, and we have done so, in several instances, with some satisfactory results. Within our territorial limits, as is the case, I suppose, within the limits of every other Conference, there are quite large neighborhoods without any regular or frequent religious meetings ; and if we had the right kind of ministers to send into such neighborhoods, and the money to sustain them, much good could be done, in a general way, and some new churches established. But to meet the growing demand upon us for this important missionary work, as preliminary to the organization of new societies, — the general demand throughout the country, — we annually need at least the hundred thousand dollars which we have talked of raising for so many years, but have been able to raise but once — the hundred thousand dollars, and a hundred missionaries full of Christian faith and



love, who long to preach the gospel of Christ for the good they can do. And by so rich a denomination as ours, that hundred thousand dollars ought to be raised every year. It will be raised when we have the true faith and the divine life in our hearts.

Our Plymouth and Bay Conference has not been much agitated by the questions at issue between our "extreme right and extreme left wings"; and we have been able, in quite a remarkable degree, to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and to go on most harmoniously with our meetings and our co operative work. We have thought experimental and practical religion—the religion of the heart and the life—preferable to dogmatic theology or speculative philosophy, and have acted accordingly. We are a unit, both ministers and people, in our desire and purpose to continue loyal to Christ as the Head of the Church, and to be faithful in using our influence to keep our common denomination, as well as this National Conference, on a Christian basis; for none of us, I believe, have as yet found any other basis so good, or discovered for ourselves, or in the writings of any non-Christians, "free religion," or speculative philosophy, anything to be compared with that original Gospel of Jesus Christ, which breathes peace on earth and good will to men, and whose first great idea is the Universal Paternity of God, and the last the universal holiness and harmony of the human race.

But whilst our Conference is unyieldingly Christian in its faith and position, and is profoundly convinced that our entire denomination should be kept so,—as of course it will be,—it, nevertheless, positively means, I think, to be Christian in a thoroughly liberal, truly Catholic sense and spirit; going behind no man's honest and consistent Christian profession to test him by his special theological or Christological views. In saying this, I think I do but express the general conviction of our Conference, as I certainly do my own deepest conviction.

And as I shall not be likely to trespass again upon your time during the sitting of this Conference, I can but express the hope that at the present important crisis of our denominational affairs, and as we enter upon the discussions and duties that lie before us, we may keep ourselves in the attitude to be fully baptized into that Spirit of the living and loving Father which was so richly manifest in the life and death of Jesus Christ; and thus show, to those without, who will critically and zealously watch us, that we are a Christian body, not so much by

any mere Christian shibboleth we may pronounce, as by manifesting a truly Christian faith and spirit, and by devising and going forward to do the Christian work which society the most needs and demands of us. It is my own deep conviction that there are far greater evils around us than either believing too much or too little in the supernatural, — moral, social, political evils, such especially as intemperance, war, and the worship of mammon, — which require of us a thorough exposure and Christian handling, that will indicate to the world that we are avoiding the folly and bigotry of the past sixteen centuries, in denouncing theoretical heresies and sustaining practical iniquities.

When we go away from this Conference, we ought to be able to go away, not disgusted with irreverent and flippant denials on the one hand, or exclusive dogmatic assertions on the other; but with a profound respect, if not perfect unity, for all that shall have spoken their sincere, honest word, because spoken in the spirit of love; and go away, too, with a deep conviction that the Conference has been a great success, having quickened us all into newness of moral and spiritual life; brought us into true fraternal relations; and given to the cause of Liberal Christianity a new and powerful impulse, which will make its future more hopeful than ever before. No one's speculative errors will be likely to be driven out of him by sharp controversy, and much less by dogmatic assertions and denunciations; but both conservative and radical errors *may* drop off of some of us, if we are only reverently and humbly led by the good spirit of God, which always leads from discord to harmony, and to that unity in Christian work which will finally result in the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. And it will be well for us at this time, to remember the words of the Master: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"; and "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

WILLIAM H. FISH, *Secretary.*

Accepted.

Rev. George H. Young, of Westford, read the following

# REPORT OF THE NORTH MIDDLESEX LOCAL CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

The North Middlesex Conference, as indicated by its name, is composed of churches in the northern portion of Middlesex County, in Massachusetts, together with a few others in southern New Hampshire.

Our membership consists of the churches in Ashby, Chelmsford, Groton, Groton Junction, Lowell, Littleton, Pepperell, Shirley, Stowe, Tyngsboro', Westford, Massachusetts; Nashua, Wilton, East Wilton, New Hampshire.

For the most part, our societies are among the poorer, smaller, and weaker of our body; with but one or two exceptions, *all* the churches in this Conference answer to this description.

For a while after the organization of the Conference, meetings were held semi-annually. But it was thought best to adopt a new policy, and to invite *all* to attend the public meetings of the Conference. This plan has resulted most happily, for it secures greater gatherings, giving the enthusiasm of numbers, and tends to interest a larger percentage in each society than was the case under the earlier system. It is no uncommon circumstance for delegations from individual churches to number twenty-five or thirty, and in some instances from thirty to fifty.

These meetings have served an admirable purpose;—societies have found themselves actual members of a sisterhood of churches; acquaintance has been increased, enthusiasm in our work has been generated, a new life has been infused, and that petty feeling of isolation which formerly was one of our chief characteristics, is a thing of the past.

Of actual missionary work within our limits, but little can be said. There are but four towns in our borders, but what already have liberal Christian societies. No active efforts are at present making to plant churches of our faith in these localities, which, in the aggregate, contain a population of more than fifty-five hundred souls, and present an opportunity which may yet be recognized by the Conference.

In the matter of collections for the American Unitarian Association, there has been a steady increase in the amount raised.

In the year 1867, we collected \$1,144.82; in 1868, \$1,337.31; in 1869, \$1,741.65.

The first of these sums represented contributions from all but four of our societies, but in the years '68 and '69 the record is a clean one, for every single church in our membership manifested its life by contributing, — a fact of which we feel justly proud. It is the hope of the officers that our record in the future may be equally satisfactory. It is worthy of mention that since the plan was adopted of apportioning among the different Conferences in our body what has been considered by the Secretaries a fair and equitable statement of the proportion for each to raise of the hundred thousand dollars we have universally failed to collect, the North Middlesex Conference has, in each case, exceeded the sum asked from it. The officers have not attempted to assess individual churches, but have left the matter entirely to their liberality, conscience, and zeal. We have aimed to secure the co-operation of *all* our societies, and have been more glad to receive the collections from our whole number than we should have been to have raised an equal or larger amount even, had it come from only a part of our churches.

In our correspondence, we have distinctly stated that, while we wished to raise as large sums as possible, yet that consideration was secondary to our desire that *every* church in our Conference should do something. And we feel rejoiced that for these two years our Conference presents a complete record in this respect.

It has caused us some regret to see so many indications among us of a changing ministry. Only three of our societies retain the ministers whose labors they enjoyed at our organization. Yet this fact has its compensations; for we have been pleased to see that churches of influence in other Conferences in our denomination have looked with longing eyes at the clergy of North Middlesex, and have, in conspicuous instances, succeeded in transplanting some of our most valued men into their fields, — but our loss is their exceeding gain.

Four of our societies are now without ministers; we trust that these vacancies will be soon filled.

On the whole, our condition is one of fair vigor. Our churches vary in their amount of life and energy. Some are wide awake, while perhaps some are in the opposite condition, — yet it is doubtful whether at any period of our history there was any greater interest than exists to-day. Among the agencies for promoting this life and interest, and among the instrumen-



talities for assisting us in carrying forward our legitimate work as Christian churches, we recognize none as more promising than this of the Local Conference. Its bond is that of sympathy, its inspiration is that of Christian love, its object is the increase of Christian life. We are satisfied with this bond, this inspiration, and this object, and for ourselves we stand on that one foundation which is laid, even Jesus the Christ. The Secretary believes he speaks the almost unanimous voice of the Conference in saying that we reluct at any attempt to define that basis other than it is defined. We rejoice to be in a church of Christian freedom, and while we declare ourselves Christian, and intend, by the grace of God, to keep on steadily doing that thing, we yet decline to accept anybody's definitions, — we know there are diversities of operations, but the same spirit. While our Conference believes its foundation is the true rock, and there is willing to stand, finding its creed in Christianity, its Statement of Faith the New Testament, yet it clings fast to that *liberty* wherewith Christ makes free, and fondly hopes that the National Conference will see to it that our body — having so glorious a past, and the promise of so splendid a future — will not become entangled in any yoke of bondage. We believe the truth has made us free, and free we hope to remain.

GEORGE H. YOUNG, *Secretary*.

Accepted.

Rev. John B. Green, of Chelsea, read the following

#### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE SOUTH MIDDLESEX CONFERENCE OF CONGREGATIONAL (UNITARIAN) AND OTHER CHRISTIAN SOCIETIES.

The South Middlesex Conference was organized in December, 1866, and is composed of thirty societies.

There have been seven meetings of this Conference since the last meeting of the National Conference; and subjects of a practical character have been discussed.

Two societies have recently applied for admission to the Conference; viz: That in Reading, a new society, recently gathered chiefly by the efforts of the Rev. Mr. Fairchild of Stonham; and the society at Watertown.

The Secretary finds that some of the ministers do not always read to the societies the circular call of the Conference.



There has not been much missionary work attempted, chiefly for the reason that there has not been much work to be done. The principal work to be done is among the churches composing the Conference in the way of arousing them to the importance of the thorough organization of the individual parishes, for practical Christian work in the places where they exist.

The Secretary is of opinion that the National Conference has done a good and needed work in inducing the various churches to organize themselves into Local Conferences; and if these various Conferences can only succeed in inducing the individual churches to organize themselves so that their spiritual power may be more directly and effectively exerted upon the ignorance and sin in their more immediate neighborhoods, much good might be accomplished, both in the churches themselves, and in the community at large.

Respectfully submitted,

J. B. GREEN, *Secretary.*

Accepted.

Rev. William G. Seandlin, of Grafton, read the following

#### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE WORCESTER CONFERENCE OF CONGREGATIONAL (UNITARIAN) AND OTHER CHRISTIAN SOCIETIES.

In presenting the report solicited by the National Conference, I would ask attention briefly to the work which has been attempted by the Worcester Conference, and to the results which have been accomplished, so far as they may be learned from the Annual Report made to this Conference in the years 1868-9.

In the year 1868 two circulars were issued by the Board of Officers: the first upon Finance, the second upon Statistics.

The circular upon Finance was issued with a twofold object: first, to solicit contributions to the American Unitarian Association for the general missionary work of the denomination; and secondly, to ask practical sympathy for our friends in Ware, whose church had been destroyed by fire. Twenty-two out of the twenty-nine societies responded: contributing to the American Unitarian Society \$2,910.76; to the church in Ware, \$873.63; in all, \$3,784.39; making \$284.39 over our proportional part of the \$100,000 *which should have been raised.* Four, out

of the seven societies not contributing, were either building new churches, or remodelling the old ones.

The second circular, touching the question of statistics, showed that seventeen out of the nineteen societies responding had distinct church organizations, with an aggregate membership of 1291. The nineteen Sunday-schools gave a membership of 2219, 435 of whom were adults.

In 1869, eleven of our societies had either ordination or installation services. This large addition of gentlemen unacquainted with the work previously attempted by the Conference, had its effect upon the results which were anticipated: leaving our work in the old parishes, rather than in efforts to start new ones. The plan of organization still needs *adoption* by some; and greater use and confidence among those accepting it as the basis of their work.

We have attempted a plan looking to a thorough allotment of the whole county; assigning towns having no liberal society to the oversight and care of those in which such society exists; thus giving to each a sphere for missionary toil; — not with the expectation of starting new societies: but that we discover whatever liberal sentiment exists, and nurture it so far as we may.

The Circular issued this year showed our societies to be blessed with peace and harmony among themselves; broadening and deepening their influence in the communities where they exist; and showing an increase in numbers proportionate to the growth of the population.

The Financial returns for the year 1869 are as follows: Twenty-one societies contributed to the American Unitarian Association, \$2,665.43; twenty-one societies to the Sunday-School Society, \$491.17; seven societies to the Freedmen, \$1,530; ten Societies to other charitable objects, \$607.86; — making in all \$5,294.46; against \$3,784.39 in 1868, and \$2,515.30 in 1867; showing the unquestioned result of organized co-operative effort.

At the meeting of the Board of Officers held in Worcester, July 28, 1870, the following Resolution was passed, with the understanding that it should form a part of this Report, viz: —

“*Resolved*, That the Local Conferences should have a recognized relation upon the Board of the American Unitarian Association; and the National Conference is requested to inaugurate some measure by which it can be accomplished.”

With the permission of the Conference, I would occupy five minutes upon the general subject of our national organizations, to make the object of this resolution clear.

Our recent movements looking towards national organized effort can be justly claimed (in your presence) as a positive success. But there needs to be a modification of the old machinery. As now, this National Conference, and these Local Conferences from which reports are being made, are parts of a unique system. We have an admitted right on the floor of this body. But what connection have we with the American Unitarian Association? That body, through its officers, consults with the Conferences, as a matter of courtesy, and solicits through them—we might almost say now, of a necessity—the funds that are needed for its work.

We need to make the American Unitarian Association national, if it is to be the hand of this National Conference. Instead of a committee being appointed to nominate its Officers and Directors, each Conference should elect one of its members as a Director on the Board of the American Unitarian Association. In this way the American Unitarian Association would give the bodies, through which it solicits, a representation, and a voice in the expenditure of the funds which they raise. It would then have upon its Board men familiar with the local wants; and a member of its Board, to speak for its policy and expenditures, in each of these localities.

I know something may be said about the expense. But the assembling of such a body twice or three times in the year, giving it the time needed for the interest of our faith, would be sufficient, with the usual correspondence; and would make but little addition to the usual outlay.

Then touching our Sunday-school interests. Our denomination is not large enough to need two organizations. Everything pertaining to the finances and publications of the Sunday School Society should be a part of the American Unitarian Association work,—a department presided over by one of the Assistant Secretaries of that organization. Each Conference should set apart one of its meetings for the consideration of Sunday-school interests, and the denomination should be solicited through them for a contribution to the general Sunday-school funds, each year in the month of May; obtaining in this way for its work what the Sunday School Society has never been able to obtain by itself. The report of that society for the year ending Sept. 30, 1870, shows its donations, including life and annual mem-

bership, to be \$2,116.50. And at its meeting last week, nearly one-half the time was spent in irritating discussion upon finance and organization.

This interest is second to none in the denomination, and should be a part of our general work; and until we are larger than now, it should be a department using the efficient machinery of *one organization*. I speak only of the transfer of finance and publication. State and Local Sunday School Societies should continue to exist for the same purpose that this National Conference does; viz.: to discuss general interest, and give something helpful to the teachers that assemble, — assuming more and more the character and work of Teachers' Institutes.

To recapitulate. Make the American Unitarian Association national, by giving your Local Conferences a representation upon its Board of Directors. Concentrate the finance and publishing interests of the Sunday School Society in a department of the American Unitarian Association work, under one of its Assistant Secretaries; so that the concentrated power of the denomination may be brought to bear upon one piece of machinery; — thus saving the friction of our many systems, and our present waste.

This we believe the interest of the denomination demands, and for that reason excuse ourselves for presenting it to your consideration.

WM. G. SCANDLIN, *Secretary*.

Accepted.

Rev. Edwin M. Stone, of Providence, R. I., read the following

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE CHANNING CONFERENCE.

The Channing Conference was organized April 17, 1867. It embraces the Christian Churches of the Unitarian Faith in the States of Rhode Island and Connecticut, and in the County of Bristol, Massachusetts, fourteen in all. It is also open to such other Christian Churches as may assent to its Constitution.

The object of the Conference, as expressed in its Constitution, is "to promote a sympathy of feeling and community of action among its members for all good, worthy, and Christian ends; to draw more closely the bonds of Christian fellowship; to help in the illustration, enforcement, and application of the principles of the gospel of Christ; and to act as auxiliary to the 'National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian



Churches,' in carrying out the purposes of its organization." Besides the usual officers of such a body, the Conference has a Standing Committee on Christian Work, and another on Sunday-schools. The names of these Committees are sufficiently suggestive of their respective functions, to render explanation in this place unnecessary.

The first President of the Conference was Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside, who was succeeded by the present incumbent, His Excellency Governor Seth Padelford. The first Secretary was Rev. Charles W. Buck; the second, Rev. Arthur May Knapp; and the third, the undersigned.

Since its organization, the Conference has held eight semi-annual sessions. These meetings have been largely attended, and have contributed much to the promotion of Christian fraternity and zeal. Under its auspices, missionary labor has been performed in Pawtucket, Tisbury, Middleboro', Somersct, Bowensville, Wakefield, Apponaug, Nayatt, and other places. The mission at Tisbury, under the charge of Rev. Daniel W. Stevens, is specially devoted to seamen, and has thus far accomplished great good. Every year since the Conference has had an existence, a partial support has been given from its funds to a theological student at Meadville or Boston or Cambridge. Next year there will be two from within its limits at Cambridge Divinity School, one of whom will receive aid in prosecuting his studies. The Conference desires to make this a characteristic feature of its work, and never to allow itself to be without one young man, at least, in process of training for the ministry. When, therefore, in view of the fields white unto harvest, and the paucity of laborers to enter in and gather the sheaves, the almost desponding inquiry shall be reiterated, "Whence is our needed supply of ministers to be obtained?" Let it be addressed to the Local Conferences for a practical answer.

The Conference has also contributed from its funds to the support of the students' table at Cambridge.

The Sunday-schools connected with the churches composing the Conference are in a flourishing condition, and are more and more regarded as the nurseries of our future congregations. It is hardly necessary to add, that while the religious education of pupils in these important auxiliaries to church life, should be thoroughly Christian in character, all proper influences should be employed to foster in them devoted attachment to the household of faith in the midst of which they were born, and which reverently acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head.



The Channing Conference has recently been called, in the Providence of God, to mourn the decease of one of its most valued members, — a gentleman whose best efforts were given in support of the denomination with which his whole life had been identified, and whose Christian courtesy and ability as the presiding officer of a deliberative assembly, was eminently conspicuous during the session of the National Conference in 1868. The prosperity of that body, the welfare of the American Unitarian Association, — of which he had been both an efficient Director and an honored President, — and the increasing usefulness of our local organization, were among the subjects of his latest thoughts; and while the memory of those who knew him in private life, or were associated with him in public affairs, shall be true to its office, the name and Christian character of Thomas D. Eliot will be held in profound respect.

Respectfully submitted,

EDWIN M. STONE, *Secretary*.

Accepted.

Rev. R. D. Burr, of Yonkers, New York, read the following

#### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NEW YORK AND HUDSON RIVER LOCAL CONFERENCE.

The New York and Hudson River Conference, was organized in the church of All Souls, New York, December 7, 1866. Seven churches were represented at its first meeting. There are now belonging to it, and taking an active part in it, eleven.

This Conference, I believe, was peculiar in having, in the beginning, a Secretary paid for his services, whose whole time should be at the disposal of the Conference, for such work as the Board of Directors should determine to be done, within the limits of the Conference. At the first meeting of the Board, held December 11, 1866, it was voted that a Committee be appointed to nominate a Secretary; and his salary was fixed so as not to exceed \$2,000 a year. The Rev. Dr. Farley was selected to be its first Secretary. He having declined the office, it was offered to Rev. Mr. Fay, at a larger salary. This was also declined. It was next tendered to Rev. Mr. Galvin, who also declined to accept it. Rev. W. R. G. Mellen was then nominated and chosen; and he entered upon the duties of the office. He was required to make a monthly report, in writing, of what, as Secretary, he had done.

So this Conference began by undertaking to do — by a Secretary whose whole time the Conference could command — missionary work in this vicinity. There was also a vote passed, that at the discretion of the Board, other persons might be employed in doing similar missionary work.

What was the result of this plan?

Two churches were very soon revived: one at Staten Island, and the second in the city of Newburg; and it is altogether improbable that these churches would again have lived, had it not been for the helping hand of this Conference, through its Secretary extended. Since that time, in each of these places has a church been built, and strength and durability are promised.

Secondly may be mentioned, as one of the good things resulting from the organization of this Conference, what was done towards the enlargement and improvement of the then *Christian Inquirer*. At the first meeting of the Board, these things were considered, and measures were adopted to put this paper on a substantial financial basis, and to extend its circulation.

So began our Conference of New York City and Hudson River, and we can point to these permanent and important results accomplished by its instrumentality, which amply justify its organization and its first plan. Nearly two years ago, however, the plan of its action was somewhat changed, and instead of being a proper missionary body, doing the work which seems specially to belong to the American Unitarian Association, it has become a body seeking mainly the fellowship of the churches associated; doing also something for the assistance of those churches within its borders, which may need it. Such churches now present their claims at the meetings of the Conference, or at the meetings of the Board of Direction, find a welcome hearing, and are assisted, as the importance of the case seems to demand. As a missionary body, therefore, this Conference may now be said to have ceased to exist; the duties of the Secretary being discharged in keeping records, calling meetings, and keeping himself informed of all matters which should be brought to the attention of the Conference and its officers.

For two years the Conference held semi-annual meetings. For about two years we have held three meetings a year. One meeting for the choice of officers takes place in October, and the officers are chosen for a term of two years.

Under the new arrangement, then, what has been the success?

Of fellowship, sympathy of feeling, union in purpose and union in the employment of means to accomplish it, attained

through our meetings in Conference, I wish I could report more favorably than the truth seems to require. To the Secretary it does not seem that this fellowship has been gained to any remarkable degree. Not so much has been gained as ought to have been. It would be unfair to say, or to convey the impression, that the bond of love between the churches is not stronger than before; but we are pained to be compelled to say only this word.

But, secondly, our meetings have resulted in good to our cause in this neighborhood, because at the meetings of the Conference, we have always those present, who, through the leading papers of the city, report our sayings and doings, giving us thus a recognition by the public, much wider than we could expect if each one was silently working in his own society. Amid so much that is sectarian, distracting, and deadening in this city, the light must be most conspicuously placed; people must be forced to hear our message; and anything which will assist us in gaining the ear of the people must be heartily welcome. The press have very materially helped us.

Another benefit which the Conference has conferred upon our churches is this: The wants of churches have been presented; their claims have been freely and lovingly canvassed; and the aid which was needed has been supplied. The strong have known of and have cheerfully borne the infirmities of the weak.

What are our hindrances?

I. One of the precepts of the Apostle, "diligent in business," is so faithfully observed in this city and neighborhood, that it is almost impossible to enlist, very deeply, the attention of the gentlemen of our congregations in the welfare of the Conference, and persuade them to attend our meetings; and this hindrance is so great, that do the very best which we can, as ministers, it can be only partially overcome.

II. It should also be said, that those, upon whom it devolves to create, if necessary, and certainly to sustain, an interest in the prosperity of the Conference, I mean the pastors themselves of our churches, are not so devoted to it as could be wished; nor to that degree, indeed, which the prosperity of the Conference, if it is to be maintained, demands. The usual conference and prayer meeting can hardly be had, and, I think, for the reason just suggested.

III. Probably no Conference in our Unitarian body, numerically so small as ours, has in it radical and conservative elements so strongly pronounced as are here met with. If it

be objected that we cannot agree in the kind of work to be done, the difficulties in the way of union on the basis of agreement in thought are equally insuperable or troublesome, and besides this, some of our societies are without pastors, consequently we are working short-handed.

What therefore shall be done?

We cannot return to the plan with which this Conference began its existence; we have not the means necessary to sustain it; and to the American Unitarian Association this kind of missionary work seems specially to belong.

Fellowship is possible. Other Conferences make this the great purpose of their meetings; we can and should do the same. Coming together, therefore, to receive light and to give light; to radiate heat and to absorb it; we shall be inspired for the discharge of our individual tasks. We must, therefore, *intensify our fellowship*, as our means of success.

What are our encouragements?

As compared with the time when this Conference was organized, I certainly believe we have much, and can see much for which to be grateful. The general condition of our churches, with the drawbacks always to be found, is encouraging.

Within a year and a half, — from December, 1868, to June, 1870, — four new churches have been dedicated to the service of man, in the worship of God. Since that time, one society, represented at the first meeting of the Conference, has been suppressed, — an eclipse which we will hope is only temporary. But each of the four churches which have been built is occupied by a society, which, four years ago, had no vital existence; and three new congregations have been gathered. Two more should be, — Newark and Jersey City.

From the best acquaintance I can gain with all our churches, and in all their relations, there is, I should say, in them all, a good degree of Christian activity. And I can also truly say that our foothold, as a branch of the Christian church, was never more secure in this vicinity than now, — and a foothold here, let it be understood, is very significant, considering our population in its sectarian feeling.

Than this city and neighborhood, I know of no more important place in the land for Unitarian Christianity to keep its hold, and extend its influence, at any expenditure of men and of means.

Among the good things which this Conference has performed, is the establishment in this city of a book-store, where all our



literature can be found, and information sought, with regard to our cause. Our expectations of good from it have been more than realized. It is a centre of usefulness in the propagation of our truth in this city, and is accomplishing much in calling the attention of others to our truth, who, but for this place, would give the subject no thought. I can assure you, that ministers of other denominations are reading our books with eagerness. Our tracts are very frequently called for; and we confidently count upon this as being one of the very best things which have been done by our Conference. It should be supported as one of the important missionary movements of our denomination.

R. D. BURR, *Secretary*.

Accepted.

Rev. George L. Cary, of Meadville, Pa., read the following

#### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE LAKE ERIE CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

The Lake Erie Conference, like some Western cities, exists chiefly upon paper. The societies included within its limits are four in number, — those at Toledo, Sandusky, and Cleveland, in Ohio; and Meadville, in Pennsylvania. Other unorganized bodies of Liberal Christians in northern Ohio and western Pennsylvania are invited to send delegates to the meetings of the Conference, and are represented in its Board of Officers. The societies composing the Conference are so remote from each other, and its limits so great, — no society being within fifty miles of any other, the whole territory represented being two hundred miles in length, — that frequent meetings are impossible. The most that the Conference attempts is to cover the ground with its organization, meet when it is convenient, and do whatever work may at any time seem to be feasible. Under the circumstances, this appears to be all that it is wise to attempt.

GEO. L. CARY, *Secretary*.



The following Local Conference Reports, not presented at the meeting, but forwarded subsequently to the Secretary, are here inserted : —

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE WESTERN ILLINOIS AND IOWA CONFERENCE OF UNITA- RIAN AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

This Conference was organized at Sheffield, Illinois, Jan. 28, 1869. It has held four meetings. It is composed of the following societies: Quincy, Sheffield, Geneseo, — Illinois; Davenport, Keokuk, — Iowa.

The object of the Conference as stated in its constitution is *to promote the interests of Christianity*. Our meetings have been full of zealous interest, and have called together good representatives from neighboring Christian churches. A few choice spirits from the Universalist and Christian denominations have accepted our free invitation to meet with us.

The majority of the societies in the Conference have been recently formed, and require the whole time and labor of the pastors. There are good opportunities within our bounds for missionary work. If the Western Secretary could spend a larger part of his efforts in this Mississippi valley, self-supporting churches could soon be established in many flourishing towns and cities. The present organized societies feel the great disadvantage of being so widely separated. Some very hopeful movements to establish new societies have already failed, because the personal presence of a leader was wanting. A man of influence who could overlook the field, go where he is needed, and stay for a few weeks or months, might soon double the number of our societies.

We earnestly hope that, at an early day, the effort may be put forth to make practical statements of our faith in many new places of this promising field.

The societies of our Conference are growing in permanency and influence. Sheffield has a good new church building, ready for dedication. Davenport is beginning to build; and Geneseo is talking in earnest about the house of worship which is needed, and will undoubtedly be built.

Our Sunday-schools are flourishing, and are well supplied with library books most attractive to children.

The need we most feel now, in our Conference, is the work which the Western Secretary can give.

Respectfully submitted,

M. J. MILLER, *Secretary*.

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE CHICAGO CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN CHURCHES.

The Chicago Conference of Unitarian Churches, which was organized December 2d, 1868, under the call of Rev. C. A. Staples, Western Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, has continued its existence and grown into importance and usefulness. Although organized to unite the Chicago churches in closer sympathy and fellowship, the Conference extended its invitation to all the sister churches within convenient distance to join it, and a union of fourteen churches and societies of our faith has been established.

The regular sessions of the Conference occur quarterly; and during the year 1870 there have been three meetings held, one at the Third Unitarian Church (Rev. C. A. Staples), one at the Church of the Messiah (Rev. R. L. Collier), and one at the Unitarian church at Geneva, Illinois, where Rev. T. H. Eddowes preaches the Liberal faith.

The annual meeting occurred January 26, 1870, when the following officers were elected for one year: Artemas Carter, President; S. C. Mason, Vice-President; C. H. S. Mixer, Treasurer; Geo. N. Carpenter, Secretary. Board of Directors: D. L. Shorey, T. M. Thompson, Rev. Z. Masters, Rev. T. H. Eddowes, S. S. Greeley.

At this meeting, Rev. Robert Collyer gave an essay on the "Four Gospels"; Rev. C. A. Staples gave an address on "How to make the Church a Home"; and Rev. T. H. Eddowes read an essay upon "What is the Practical Work of Smaller Parishes?" Interesting discussions grew out of the subjects introduced, and drew forth a full and free expression from the members of the Conference.

The Spring Conference was held May 4th, at the Church of the Messiah; and essays were read by Rev. Robert L. Collier, upon "Priests and People"; and Rev. T. H. Eddowes of Geneva, Ill., upon "Relation of the Liberal Church to its

Children." Among the important results of this meeting was the adoption of the following resolution:—

*Resolved*, That the Directors of this Conference are instructed to procure at least one essay to be read at each meeting of this Conference on topics connected with Sunday-schools, until the organization of a Liberal Sunday School Convention.

There was a profitable discussion upon the Sunday-school question, participated in by Revs. C. A. Staples, Collyer, Wendte, Meek, R. L. Collier, W. C. Gannett, C. H. S. Mixer, and others. At this session a resolution passed unanimously, recommending the establishment of a Theological School at Chicago.

The third session of the Conference was held at Geneva, Illinois, on September 21st, and opened with the usual devotional exercises. In the absence of the President, Mr. D. L. Shorey occupied the chair.

In the morning, Murry Nelson, Esq., read an essay upon "The Relation of the Church to Charity"; and in the afternoon, Rev. C. W. Wendte read an essay upon the "Specific Work of the Unitarian Sunday-school." Remarks were made upon the subjects of the essays by Revs. Z. Masters, Jones, Collier, Staples, Balch, Wendte, Danforth; and Messrs. Mixer, White, Perry, and Nelson. The following resolution was adopted:—

*Resolved*, That this Conference approves the suggestion of forming a Sunday School Society or Association within its limits, and that a Committee of three be appointed to consider and act upon this resolution.

Rev. J. L. Jones, Rev. W. L. Balch, Mr. C. H. S. Mixer, were appointed as this Committee.

The parishes where the sessions have been held have displayed a genuine hospitality, and made all the delegates and friends feel a true welcome.

The Conferences during the year have been full of activity, and a deep religious sentiment has characterized the sessions. A devotion to our cause and a tender love for our Master, have pervaded all the meetings, and there has been awakened a deeper interest in the work of the Conference among all our churches, and a more active disposition to labor in the vineyard of the Lord.

GEORGE N. CARPENTER, *Secretary*.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE CONFERENCE  
OF UNITARIAN AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES  
OF THE MIDDLE AND SOUTHERN STATES.

At a meeting held in Wilmington, Del., on 21st November, 1866, the Conference of the Middle and Southern States was formed, consisting of the churches in Northumberland and Germantown in Pa., Wilmington, Del., Vineland, N. J., Baltimore, Md., and Washington, D. C. Several churches have since been added, and it now includes the churches in Charleston, S. C., and New Orleans, La.

It has held six sessions, and for a portion of the time employed a missionary, chiefly in New Jersey. Its societies are widely separated. There have been local troubles which have stood in the way of public meetings, and not much that is definite or lasting has been accomplished. We believe, however, in the efficacy of such organizations, and hope and look for a better time to ourselves.

J. F. W. WARE, *Secretary pro tem.*

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE CONNECTICUT  
VALLEY CONFERENCE OF CONGREGATIONAL, UNI-  
TARIAN AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

The Connecticut Valley Conference was organized January 16th, 1867, and now consists of thirteen societies; namely, Springfield, Chicopee, Northampton, Whately, Deerfield, Montague, Greenfield, Rowe, Bernardston, Brattleboro', Northfield, Warwick, New Salem. Of these, five are without ministers, viz: Northampton, Warwick, Brattleboro', Whately, New Salem. Of these all but New Salem sustain regular preaching. It is a matter of great regret that a minister cannot be found for this place, for there is a flourishing academy there, and many of the pupils would attend the Unitarian church if there was service there.

The general condition of the societies is good. The call for money for the American Unitarian Association was liberally responded to. In the apportionment \$1,200 was assigned to our Conference. We raised \$1,290, — thanks to the liberality of our friends in Springfield, who raised eight hundred and twenty-five dollars.



We try to secure a contribution from all our societies, even if they are small, and are satisfied if they raise no more than five or ten dollars.

This year we hope and expect to do better than ever before. Our meetings are well attended and are quite harmonious and profitable. The Conference has been a strong bond of sympathy and union among the people of our societies. We never have had any controversy, hardly any discussion, concerning matters in dispute among Unitarians, or between them and other sects, but have striven to have matters discussed which were of practical value in our work of extending Liberal Christianity. We expect to have two meetings a year, but owing to the absence of several ministers, there was but one meeting last year.

J. F. MOORS, *Secretary*.

Mr. Thomas Coggeshall offered the following Resolution:—

*Resolved*, That in the judgment of this National Conference, the example of the Channing Conference, in formally and systematically aiding young men, students in our Theological and Divinity Schools, merits our hearty approval, is worthy of uniform adoption by the Local Conferences of our faith, and is a most noble method of replenishing our great need of young, ardent, and educated men for the pulpit and other departments of Christian labor.

Adopted.

Rev. J. B. Moore moved that the Secretary be instructed to prepare a roll of the accredited Delegates, which shall be considered as authority for all purposes of voting.

Adopted.

Rev. Dr. Bellows offered the following Resolution, and spoke thereon:—

*Resolved*, That this Conference has heard with the greatest interest the reports of the various Local Conferences, and feels that its time has been admirably expended in discovering for the first time what the active, practical condition of this Body is.

Adopted.

Rev. J. B. Moore offered the following Resolution:—

*Resolved*, That a Committee of five be nominated from the floor, to prepare and report a list of Officers for this Conference, according to the requirements of the Constitution.

Adopted. And the following persons were chosen: Rev. J. B. Moore, Rev. Charles Lowe, James H. Mitchell, Thomas Coggeshall, Rev. C. A. Staples.

Rev. Crawford Nightingale offered the following Resolution, in accordance with the suggestion of the Worcester Conference:—

*Resolved*, That the Local Conferences should have a recognized relation upon the Board of the American Unitarian Association, and the National Conference is requested to inaugurate some measure by which it can be accomplished.

The Resolution was discussed by Rev. Dr. Farley, and Mr. Francis Deane.

Rev. Wm. T. Clarke moved the following Amendment to the Resolutions:—

*Resolved*, That the whole subject of the relations of this Conference and the Local Conferences to the American Unitarian Association be referred to a committee of five to be chosen by the Chair, and to report at the next meeting of this Conference.

After discussion by Rev. Messrs. H. C. Badger, C. A. Staples, W. G. Scandlin, John A. Buckingham, J. B. Green, John H. Morison, D.D., F. C. Williams and H. W. Bellows, D.D.; on motion of Rev. Mr. Scandlin, the Resolution and Amendment were laid upon the table.

On motion of Rev. John D. Wells,

*Voted*, That in accordance with the suggestion of the Council, that the afternoon sessions terminate at 4 o'clock, we now adjourn.

And, after the announcement by the Business Committee of the order for the evening session, the Conference adjourned to the evening.

### WEDNESDAY EVENING SESSION.

The Conference was called to order by the President at half-past seven o'clock.

Rev. John Cordner, of Montreal, offered prayer.

Rev. E. E. Hale, from the Committee on Business, reported the following, as the permanent rules governing debate in the Conference: —

1. No member, without special leave of the Conference, shall speak more than ten minutes at a time, or more than once on the same subject, except in explanation.

2. The ruling of the President, on points of order, shall not be debatable.

3. In all other respects the Conference will be governed by the ordinary parliamentary rules as laid down in "Cushing's Manual," as far as applicable to the business and organization of this Conference.

4. All audible approbation or disapprobation shall be regarded as a breach of order.

Adopted, after brief remarks by Rev. Messrs. Hale and W. G. Babcock.

The Committee on Business also suggested the following arrangement for Thursday: —

That the business meeting begin at ten A. M.; the floor being first given to Rev. Mr. May, of Syracuse, for the introduction of his Declaration of Principles; and that debate on that declaration shall follow. That Mr. Putnam shall then have the floor to offer his Resolution. If Mr. May's statement is not disposed of, Mr. Putnam's resolution is specially assigned for the beginning of the afternoon session. That Thursday evening be specially assigned as a Missionary Meeting; the discussion to be opened by Prof. Everett, on "The Work of the American Unitarian Association"; to be followed by Mr. Hale, on the Southern States; and by the reports on Antioch and Humboldt Colleges.

Adopted.

Rev. Frederic Hinckley read the following communication from The First Unitarian Church, Washington: —

*To the American Unitarian Association:*

At a meeting of the Unitarian Society in Washington, D. C., held on the 10th of October, 1869, a Committee was chosen who, among other duties, were instructed to take into consideration the general interests of the society, and report at the next annual meeting.

This Committee, selected from among the oldest and most judi

cious members of the society, at the annual meeting in November, 1869, reported as follows:—

“The Committee, in view of the fact that this society has been liberally aided by the American Unitarian Association for several years, and is still unable to sustain a church in a manner desirable for this Metropolis of the Union, believe that the interests of the society and the cause of Liberal Christianity will be advanced by delivering over the church property to the American Unitarian Association on condition that the Association shall cause to be erected a new Metropolitan Church in this city; and that the members of this society will pledge themselves to aid in accomplishing this object; and it is further recommended that the Executive Committee of this Church, to be chosen at the present annual meeting, be authorized to communicate with the Association in regard to the matter, and report the result at a future meeting of the society.”

The foregoing report was unanimously adopted and referred to the Executive Committee, who, after considering the same, instructed the Chairman to address the American Unitarian Association on the subject.

It may be added that the plan here suggested has been adopted, substantially, by nearly every denomination of Christians in the country.

The Methodists have thus built a Metropolitan church in Washington, costing nearly two hundred thousand dollars. The Congregationalists, one equally large, and nearly as expensive. The Universalists have had in contemplation a proposition for raising one hundred thousand dollars, to erect a Centenary Church in this Capital. The Lutherans are now erecting a splendid Memorial Church, and the Christians have a similar project in hand.

These denominations, feeling the need and appreciating the importance of a church at the Capital worthy of their names, have each called upon its constituency throughout the country to contribute to the cost of building such a church. They believe it both wise and just to do so.

Should the Unitarian denomination adopt similar conclusions, it is estimated that the sum of fifty thousand dollars will be required from friends outside the city of Washington. Considerable subscriptions can be obtained in the city, in addition to the property of the present church, worth about twenty thousand dollars.

The old building must, in any event, soon be abandoned as a church, or repairs be made upon it beyond the means of the society, and wholly inadvisable as a measure of economy or good policy.

It is not the object of this paper to argue the question, but simply to submit the matter to the consideration of the American Unitarian Association, and through it to the Unitarian denomination in the United States.

Respectfully,

GEORGE E. BAKER, *Chairman, etc.*

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 20, 1870.



On motion of Rev. Frederic Hinekley,

*Voted*, To refer this communication to the Council of the Conference, for their consideration and action, in conjunction with the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association.

Rev. S. J. May read the following communication from the Free National Church of Christ in Washington:—

WASHINGTON, D. C., Oct. 15, 1870.

At a meeting of the Free National Church of Christ, held October 14th, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted, and the delegates to the National Conference were instructed to present them.

*Whereas*, It is understood that at the National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches, to be held at New York on the 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st of this month, the subject of the establishment of a National Missionary Church at Washington, D. C., is to be considered; and we deem it to be our duty to express to the Conference and to the denomination our feelings upon the subject, that they may know the position that this Church occupies, therefore,

*Resolved*, That we respectfully request the Conference, in its deliberations and actions upon the subject of a National Missionary Church, to bear in mind the fact there is already established in this city a Free National Unitarian Church—"The Free National Church of Christ"—which has been fully organized as a Christian Church and religious society, for about eighteen months.

*Resolved*, That we firmly believe that we are fully justified in claiming that this organization should be recognized as the foundation upon which the Free National Unitarian Church should be established.

W. H. TREADWAY,

*Clerk of the Free National Church of Christ, Washington, D. C.*

Rev. Mr. May moved that this communication be referred to the National Council for its consideration, in conjunction with the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association.

Carried.

In the absence of Rev. G. H. Hepworth, Mr. Wm. H. Baldwin, President of the Boston Young Men's Christian Union, presented the subject of

#### THEATRE MEETINGS.

Christian Friends,—I hardly think it was fair for Mr. Hepworth to have said to me within the last few minutes, that as he

was unable to be here this evening, I must open this discussion, because, as he said, he and I did the work of the Boston Theatre preaching, which inaugurated this grand movement of our denomination; and, therefore, I should take his place this evening. I remember very well when about five years ago Brother Hepworth took me into his study, and said: "I have got something I want to say to you." He closed the door, and then, he said to me: "Baldwin, the masses are not properly met by our denomination. The ministers of Boston are preaching to the people who can afford to come to church; but there are thousands who are walking our streets every Sunday night, who do not know what it is to hear the word of God. Now, I have a thought in my mind — that we should have public preaching to this people, in some large hall, or better than that, in the theatre, if we can get it." I heard him tell his story; he poured out the feelings of his heart to me; and I remember my reply. I said to him, "Hepworth, it is God's work. If you will do the preaching, I will attend to the details."

We went the next day to see the lessee of the Boston Theatre, who said that we might have the building. I remember how some of our careful, cautious friends felt about it.

Some said, "You will go into the theatre next Sunday night, and find the building not more than half full; the other denominations will laugh at you; they will say that the Unitarians have been trying to do a smart thing, and failed."

I did not want to make any boasts about it; and so I merely said to the few friends who felt so fearful about the success of the undertaking: —

"All that I can say to you is, that if you want to hear the sermon next Sunday evening, come early."

It was announced through the press that there was to be Sunday evening preaching in the theatre. The time for opening was stated at seven o'clock. At half-past six the lessees of the theatre came to me and said that they must open the doors, for the crowd was so great that they would break them in. The doors were opened, and in five minutes that great building was packed full, from parquet to gallery. It was estimated that not less than five thousand people were there; and the papers next morning said that probably six times as many people went away as got into the building. That was the inauguration of theatre preaching, and that was the success which attended it.

It has been followed up from that time until the present season; and with the exception of a single, very stormy evening, the building has been filled to its utmost capacity.

You might ask what kind of people we got there.

I have frequently heard it said that it was the church-going people who mainly constituted the audiences. Some of the regular church-going people doubtless do attend, but their number as compared with the great mass of attendants, is very small. Mr. Tompkins said to me one Monday: "Last night you had four or five hundred actors and actresses in the audience." The actors and actresses I presume may go to church from time to time, but I do not believe that many of those same persons would have gone to hear Dr. Gannett or Mr. Hale or Mr. Clarke in their churches, had they been open that evening, and the announcement of service made in the public papers.

There were people of all classes there. I remember that one evening a clergyman stood in a passage of the theatre, to see, as he said, if there were any people there that he knew. He wanted to see if we really did meet the masses there. He told me afterwards that in all that crowd he did not see half a dozen faces that he recognized. And that was the experience of many others. I think that brother Hale once told me the same story.

I remember that one night one of our wealthiest Western merchants came in late, that is, half an hour before the opening of the services; he came in with his wife and two daughters, and looked around for seats, but could not find any. They were standing in the aisle looking around, when a person got up and spoke to the gentleman and said to him, "Take my seat, and my wife will hold the baby." They were poor people, who hadn't any one to leave "baby" with; and so father, mother and child had all come to the theatre. This merchant said that he looked in the face of the person and recognized him as his barber. His wife held the baby, and they crowded together, so that the merchant's wife could get a seat.

I speak of this incident to show the different classes of people who came.

At the first meeting, I had twenty-five hundred tracts distributed by the ushers to the people as they came into the theatre. Some one said, "The crowd will destroy the tracts; they won't read them; they do not care about tracts; they will want to see the theatre, and will not want to read." And so I directed the ushers, after the meeting was over and the crowd had left, to go over the building and pick up every one they could find, and every piece of a tract that might be on the floor, and bring them to me. And so the ushers went around looking for the

tracts, and then came to me and said, "We wish to report to you in regard to the tracts. We went around all through the building looking for tracts, but without finding a single one until we came to the parquet. There we found one on the floor, which we were about picking up when a man came rushing in saying 'that he had dropped a little book, and wished that he could find it.' We gave him his 'little book.'" And that was the result of our first distribution of tracts in the Boston Theatre. (Applause.)

Last winter, when Dr. Bellows preached there, I had a four page programme printed for that night, and on it was printed Dr. Bellows' "Statement of Faith," which he gave to the *Liberal Christian*. There were four thousand copies distributed; and we did not find a single one left in the theatre. They were all carried away from the building, and doubtless were read. It was pure Unitarian talk. It went into a great many families, and we cannot know how much good it did.

Wherever theatre preaching has been inaugurated, — in Boston, Nashua, Detroit, and Lowell, — it has been successful. Large audiences have attended, and great interest has been manifested. I believe that it is our duty, in city and town, to procure the largest hall we can, and there hold these public services, where God's children can come together and hear from time to time, on winter Sunday evenings, our glorious, pure, unadulterated Unitarian faith. I trust that we shall each go from this place with the renewed determination to use all our powers in doing all that we can to give the hungry masses that food which you and I love so well. Let us do all that we can wherever we are, to help along the glorious faith that we cherish so dearly, and which we must not selfishly keep to ourselves but give to everybody within our reach.

Mr. Wm. B. Weedon read the following

### REPORT ON CHRISTIAN UNIONS.

During the past five years, many members of the Unitarian body, in common with other individuals, have been interested in several movements known as "Unions," or "Fraternalities," devoted to the elevation of humanity. These organizations have generally, but not always, started under the impulse of theatre preaching.

Our first inquiry is, How do these institutions differ from the old "Christian Unions" and the present "Young Men's Chris-



tian Associations"? I should say that the former Unions, which were generally unsuccessful, and the Associations were joint stock institutions, into which the various sects entered, expecting returns in kind. The modern movements, on the other hand, are Unions into which individuals have entered as such, and worked for a common unity. In this view members of all sects have co-operated in these later movements. The definition is not exact, but is sufficiently so.

The largest of these is the Boston Young Men's Christian Union, which after a suspense of life was re-organized in the spring of 1868. It has a large membership, numbering in the last year 1176. It has also one hundred life and six subscription memberships. It maintains a reception room for amusements, a library and reading room, and gymnasium. The library and reading room are open on Sundays, and public religious services are held in the hall of the Union, Sunday evenings. Also devotional exercises occupy from ten to fifteen minutes every evening. Classes are formed in the Bible, Vocal Music, German, French, Mechanical Drawing, Book-keeping, Shakespeare, History, Rhetoric, and for Debate, and light Gymnastics. Frequent lectures, readings, musical and other entertainments are given. Social gatherings have occasionally been held, and ladies invited to them. A Committee on Benevolent Action is subdivided on Employment, Boarding-houses, Churches, Hospitals, Clothing, and Charitable and Benevolent Institutions. The institution, as a whole, is very successful, and filled with life and activity.

On the 3d of March, 1868, the Union for Christian Work was organized in the city of Providence. The objects proposed were "To maintain free popular religious meetings. To establish such free meetings for religious inquiry and moral improvement, together with such means of intellectual cultivation as may be found practicable.

"To extend a welcome to strangers coming to the city, and to provide a place which shall be to them as a home, where may be found amusement and recreation for leisure hours, sympathy and aid in time of trouble, and all the influences of social companionship and home life which can help to destroy the power of the allurements to vice with which city life abounds.

"To engage in such active benevolent work as may be needed; to visit those who are sick and in prison; to aid those who are in want; and especially to help those whom a word of kindness and sympathy at the right time may save from lives of degradation and sin."



For administration, the members were grouped into four sections, viz: on Worship, on Education, on Hospitality, on Benevolence.

In the summer the Union leased a suite of fine rooms. They were fitted as an amusement room, a reading-room and library, a class-room, a committee-room, with the necessary cloak and dressing-rooms. The Union also has the privilege of a commodious hall, in connection with the other rooms, for lectures or entertainments. The rooms were neatly furnished, and supplied with the means for various games, reading matter, etc., and were opened to the public October 2, 1868.

The following prayer of dedication, which was written by some of the members, better expresses these purposes of the institution than any words of mine can:—

Father of souls! We who have joined ourselves together for thy service, now ask thy blessing on our work. Make us quick to feel the sorrow and sin around us, and tender and strong to meet it. Make us quick to see the goodness in human souls around us, and wise to call it out and give it work. Teach us to know our own sins, strengthen our wills to live better lives, keep us brave and humble, give us the help we ask, and the help we know not we need, and draw us all nearer to Thyself.

These rooms have been constantly open from two, P. M., until ten o'clock, P. M. The number of visitors has never been less than forty, and sometimes more than three hundred, at one time. The average number in the winter has been from one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and fifty. Boys under fourteen years are excluded.

I should give more details of the operations of this institution, were there not many present who have seen them with their own eyes, and can give to a description the power of the living voice. The work carried out is very similar to that of the New Bedford Union, which we report in full below.

As we are leaving the good mother of Unions, I wish to impress it on all earnest persons that they owe a large debt of gratitude to the quiet and devoted men and women, but especially women, who have carried the real burden of this enterprise. They are seldom seen in conventions, and never in the public prints; but their pure enthusiasm and patient effort have alone made this work possible.

The "Salem Fraternity" organized in the spring of 1869, taking up the most of the objects of the Providence Union. The design was "To provide evening instruction and amuse-

ment for that class of our population who, being confined to their work during the day, need recreation at the close of their labors. Having no comfortable homes where they might enjoy it, they are led to seek it elsewhere, and often in places of temptation." One of the rooms has been set apart for instruction, by lectures, lessons in book-keeping, arithmetic, reading, writing, needle-work, etc., and in each of these departments there have been instances of marked success. Indeed, so constant and eager has been the demand for increased facilities to enjoy the full benefit of this institution, that the Board has been encouraged to seek another location, which might furnish more enlarged accommodations to develop the full advantages sought for. It was my privilege to listen to an account of the workings of this association from Mr. Vice-President Lakeman. It was very interesting, showing in kind the same successes and failures we had had in Providence.

The Brooklyn Liberal Christian Union was organized in 1867, but in November, 1869, its name was changed to the "Union for Christian Work." They have a pleasant reading-room and library, but they have devoted their amusements to boys whose home education is neglected. They have on their books the names, ages, and occupations (if any) of over 1,600 boys, ages from seven to twenty. The average attendance is one hundred and twenty. Some learn to write, some to spell, some to read, while some receive lessons in drawing and sketching. Others read boys' books, or play at draughts. They are attended and watched over by ladies and gentlemen. This admirable feature ought to be incorporated in all the Union movements. With these social play-rooms for boys on the streets, and a vigorous industrial school in the country, any large town might purge itself of vagrants in ten years.

Mr. William Rotch, the President of the "New Bedford Union," has kindly furnished me with an account of their movement from the start. I give it in detail, as this vigorous association deserves attention, and it also shows the method of initiating a Union. New Bedford had conducted one or more courses of theatre meetings.

"After an informal meeting, Jan. 24, 1870, the 'Union for Good Works' was organized on a plan similar to that of the 'Union for Christian Work,' in Providence, by the choice of a President, three Vice-Presidents, two Secretaries (both ladies), and a Treasurer. These officers constituted for the time the Executive Board, and performed most of the work necessary for

the complete organization of the society, and for its installation in suitable rooms. A finance committee of nineteen (including the Executive Board) was chosen to canvass the city, and report how much money would be subscribed, and how much would be necessary to carry on the Union for a year. This Committee, at the end of a fortnight, reported that the subscriptions had already amounted to two thousand dollars, and that their estimate of the expenses for the first year (exclusive of such sums as should be contributed by the benevolent section) was twenty-five hundred dollars. The total amount received by the Treasurer up to this time is about forty-five hundred dollars, and the total amount expended (including about three hundred dollars spent by the section on benevolence) is nearly twenty-five hundred dollars, leaving a balance in the Treasury of more than two thousand dollars. We have been promised for the next year several hundred dollars for the special use of the section on benevolence, so that, in a financial point of view, we can easily see our way ahead as far as 1872, without being obliged to ask for further contributions.

"This state of affairs is peculiarly gratifying, because at the outset we were met by a number of grumblers, who declared our project was not practicable, and that we could never succeed in obtaining the money necessary even to start such an organization as proposed.

"In the beginning we took the Providence organization as a model, and held to it as far as possible; but later, when we had obtained more experience about the practical management of the society, we were obliged to make many changes to suit the local peculiarities which, in many instances, were entirely different from those in Providence.

"Our members number now nearly three hundred, and, like yours, are grouped in four sections; the section on worship, however, being very small, and having very little to do. The section on hospitality numbers about one hundred members, who are divided into six sub-sections, each of which has its chairman, and assistant-chairman, and each of these sub-sections has the charge of the public rooms of the Union (the amusement room and the reading-room which are contiguous) one evening every week. The members of these sub-sections have been for the most part punctual in their attendance, and the average on each evening has been ten or twelve: They each wear the badge of the Union, a silver monogram (U. G. W.), to distinguish them from those who are not on duty. The Union pos-

sesses twenty of these badges only, as it was not thought necessary to have them worn by others than those who are 'on duty.'

"The rooms are open from three to six, and seven to ten P. M., from October to July, although the games are only allowed to be used in the evening, as we found that during the afternoon they drew too many boys who had better be at school, or at play in the open air. Children under fourteen are not admitted except in exceptional cases. The amusement room is furnished with three croquet tables, three cue alleys, and a large number of backgammon, checker and chess boards.

"The reading-room, which is connected with the amusement room by folding-doors, is furnished with a library of about three hundred volumes, a good collection of newspapers, magazines, and other current periodical literature, with stereoscopic views, illustrated books, and works of art, and the walls of the room are adorned with pictures and statuettes. This room contains also a piano, and an organ which was made and loaned by a member of the Executive Board. The number of visitors has averaged one hundred and fifty on the first five days of the week, and about three hundred on Saturdays.

"The rooms are under the direction of a very efficient and intelligent lady, generally spoken of as the matron, who is always present when the rooms are open to preserve order and decorum, and call attention to the rules, if necessary.

"The benevolent section, or rather section on benevolence, is subdivided into four committees: 1st. Committee on Relief. 2d. Committee on Employment. 3d. Committee to visit the Jail and House of Correction. 4th. Committee on Fruits and Flowers.

"The Relief Committee has forty-one members, 'whose duty it is to aid all who are deserving of charity, and whose physical wants require attention.' The city is divided into twelve districts, for each of which there is an investigating committee, and, besides that, there is an advisory committee of three persons.

"The Employment Committee has forty-six members, who give instruction on the sewing-machine, and aid the needy in obtaining employment. Fifty-seven persons have been instructed on the sewing-machine, the average attendance being four. The society has the use of five or six machines, and there is a person ready to give instruction on each machine every afternoon.

"The Committee on the Jail and House of Correction have visited these institutions once a week, and have done a great deal of good.



"The Committee on Fruits and Flowers began operations May 29th, by receiving and arranging flowers for Post No. 1, G. A. R., for decorating soldiers' graves Decoration Day.

"The Committee consists mostly of young ladies, twenty-six members, for whom this work is more particularly adapted than the other duties of the Union. The Committee is divided into three sections, two of which, on alternate Wednesdays, distribute the contributions of flowers, fruit and other delicacies; the third, on Saturdays, arranges bouquets for the Sunday services of the School-ship, Jail. Mariners' Home, and House of Industry.

"The Section on Education is divided into four Committees: 1st. On Publications. 2d. On Lectures. 3d. On Class Instruction. 4th. On Discussions.

"The Committee on Publications has furnished the following periodicals:—

"Quarterly: *Edinburgh Review*, *North British Review*, *Westminster Review*, *London Quarterly Review*, *North American Review*.

"Monthly: *Blackwood*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Putnam's Monthly*, *Harper's Monthly*, *Western Monthly*, *Old and New*, *Lippincott's Magazine*, *American Naturalist*, *Catholic World*, *Young Folks*, *Chemical News*, *Boston Journal of Chemistry*, *Journal of the Franklin Institute*, *Van Nostrand's Engineering Journal*, *Manufacturer and Builder*, *Schoolmate*.

"Weeklies: *Every Saturday*, *Commonwealth*, *Index*, *Independent*, *The Advance*, *Woman's Journal*, *Congregationalist and Recorder*, *Universalist*, *Appleton's Journal*, and a number of daily papers.

"The Committee on Lectures has instituted two courses of lectures; four lectures on physiology by Rev. H. F. Harrington, superintendent of the public schools. Two lectures on the atmosphere by Mr. John Tetlow, principal of the Academy.

"The Committee on Discussion had one public meeting for debate, at which a paper was read, followed by a discussion on the subject of Woman Suffrage.

"The Committee on Class Instruction instituted the following courses:—

"1. Mechanical Drawing. Whole number of pupils, 33; regular attendance, 20; number of lessons, 15. It was a matter of surprise to see how much progress some of the pupils made.

"2. Book-keeping, single entry. Number of pupils, 8. One lesson a week.

"3. Book-keeping, double entry. Number of pupils, 3.

"4. English Literature. Number of pupils, 6; number of lessons, 6.

"5. German, about half a dozen members.

"6. Free-hand drawing; 4 pupils. Total number of persons receiving instruction, 60; regular attendance, 45.

"During the month of June we gave a strawberry festival in City Hall, lasting two afternoons and evenings, and the net proceeds of this were \$1,644.21; the proceeds taken from the flowers alone were \$220."

A movement has been commenced in Fairhaven, Mass., and some progress made in Cambridge. It may be of interest to note in this connection the report of an entirely disinterested witness. In January, 1870, a gentleman from the New York *Tribune* of his own accord came to Providence, saw the operations of the Union, and published a long and interesting description of it, from which we take the following:—

"The members call it a Christian Union, or, rather, to give force to a chief idea in its organization, the Union for Christian Work. It is really a church, a school, a free library, a lyceum, a charity, a social club, all in one. The aim of the members, to use the language of their articles of association, is 'to do good and grow better,'—certainly a broad basis. Practically, the Union is a means of sociability, rather than of grace, at least, so a good Methodist would say. It grew out of religious exercises and religious feeling, but sociality more than religion is the motive power that gives it life. It is not based on the idea that man is a miserable sinner, for whose salvation the united prayers of all his fellow-sinners is imperatively and instantly demanded, but on the more cheerful view that he is a sociable fellow, with more good points than bad, and that it is true practical religion to bring out and thereby cultivate these better points of his nature. The Union designs to bring the good fellows together; mutual attraction brings out the good points, the humanity that is in them."

Our report shows that the Union is not so much a church as a co-operative element in the great church. Viewing the church as the embodiment of social spiritual life, and the "ecclesia" as the organism containing that embodiment, the church has taken the kindest interest in this movement. When the Providence institution started, it had, without doubt, all the elements which should make the power of a church within it. But the eccle-

siastical establishment worked so kindly and naturally with it, that it drew it towards itself. It did not incorporate it, the "ecclesia" is not ready for that, but it fostered it, and in turn drew strength from the Union movement.

This is, to my mind, one of the most hopeful signs of the present, the very fact that the church can so adapt itself to a force so profound and far-reaching, and on the other hand can so influence the direction of such a force. If the clergyman who in his study bewails the decline of the church, would break into the life outside his limits, he would see where the real power of the church lies, and comprehend its invincible strength.

There is a plan for vitalizing the "ecclesia" so good, that we all wonder it has never found a man strong enough to execute it. I allude to systematic circuit preaching. In new communities, where the ecclesiastical life is not so sharply defined as in New England, I believe an able preacher could make his life tell on a half-dozen cities by working through this Union system. The ministries would be conducted by the lay unionists, the preaching would be conducted by the true prophet.

I could tell you of numerous difficulties and failures in Providence, only I do not delight in negatives. They are valuable elements in the working out of life, but do not constitute its essence. Shadow defines light, else we could not see an object; but the end is light, not darkness. If society were perfect, or human nature complete, in Providence there would be little need of these institutions. The Providence Union has not made a large membership, but it is a pretty tough membership. I think, as individuals, they believe in the stability and permanence of the idea.

We can lay down several points as proven, not to enthusiasts and persons interested, but to that sober common sense of people which decides the final issue of all enterprises:—

I. That the movement is not local, but the same want is found in various places, and substantially the same results follow well-directed efforts.

II. That theatre preaching has brought some of the solid influence of the church outside the walls of the "ecclesia," and planted it among the mass of the people. This outflow from the best life of the church, and the response from the people, has made a basis for the new movement.

III. That the best social as well as religious life can be developed by men and women working together. And that a real

home, free to all classes, can be established and maintained in any of our large towns.

Respectfully submitted to the National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches.

WILLIAM B. WEEDEN.

Rev. E. E. Hale read the following

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

There are but few regularly organized religious bodies in this country, which in their formal action express much desire for intercourse or co-operation with us as an organized branch of the church. The Committee believe, however, that the unity of the spirit gains more ground among all Christians; that the barriers of sect, in all bodies, are maintained chiefly by the efforts of the clergy, and that, in the various exigencies of our time, the clergy see the need that the Christian Church unite all enemies, and are less eager to maintain such barriers of division than they have been in former days.

At the period of the last Convention, the Bishop of Rome, acting as the head of the Roman Catholic Church, had just addressed an appeal to all persons calling themselves Christians to avail themselves of the approaching Council in Rome, as an occasion for offering their allegiance to the Roman See. Many of the Protestant communions made formal replies to this appeal, which, indeed, invited such replies. The liberal and Christian reply of the Swiss Protestant was translated and widely circulated by the Unitarian Association. On the motion of the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Piety and Charity, of our own Communion, represented here to-day, the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Churches considered, and has still in consideration, such a notice of the appeal as becomes the Congregational Communion. As it is acknowledged that the Congregational Order is the oldest order of discipline in the Church, there seemed a peculiar fitness in leaving to the Congregational Body of the oldest State, founded by Independents, the reply of the Independent Churches to the most threatening form of hierarchical administration. Your Committee attempted no other reply, and are glad to acknowledge the readiness with which, on this and other occasions for



common action, the Orthodox and Unitarian Congregational Churches have co-operated.

On two occasions, when Methodist State Conventions have been held, delegates appointed by us under your order have been cordially received, to express the sympathy of our churches; and these expressions have met a corresponding return.

To the Annual Conferences of the African Methodist Church we have sent delegates, on invitation.

And, on the invitation of Bishop Payne, your Committee was present at the commencement of the Wilberforce University in 1869 and 1870.

There has been efficient practical co-operation between the American Unitarian Association and the African Methodist Episcopal Church in educational work at the South. The results of this co-operation have been eminently satisfactory. If this be the proper place for such an expression, your Committee express the hope that the cordial relations now existing between us and the African Methodist Body may be carefully maintained by the several Missionary Societies and other Institutions here represented.

We have been represented at several of the State Universalist Conventions; and the Committee was present, by invitation, at that magnificent solemnity, in which, a month since, the Universalist Church commemorated the close of a century after the arrival in America of John Murray. The impulse which the Centennial celebration gives and will give to all their Churches is evident on all sides. We congratulate the Universalist body on such evidences of growth and progress.

It is in the relations of our own Commission with the African Methodist Church, and with the Universalist Church, that we find the most distinct illustration of the probable method of the unity of the Church of future times. It is not to be hoped or asked that one of the sects of Christendom shall swallow up the others. It is rather to be asked that each Body in the Church, living in its own life, cherishing its own traditions, and true to its own convictions, shall strengthen, as it best can, its machinery, and improve, as it can, its methods. If, in doing this, each body can cultivate relations of true friendship with each other; if indeed they can learn that they are one in Christ, and members one of another, most of the force till now used against each other can be expended against the common enemy; — against ignorance, disease, and sin. The relations between the little Moravian

company and the very best of Christendom have illustrated this unity in diversity in the Church. We trust that our relations with the two bodies named are but the beginning of communion wider yet of the same kind.

If in the Providence of God some great common object shall once more unite all Christendom in endeavor, we believe it will prove that the creeds of Christendom do not divide it so fatally as sceptical criticism supposes.

It has seemed to your committee, as probably to all the members of the Conference, that there may be danger in this country that in the wide diversity of expression among Christian men as to religious education, the great system of free national education in America may be endangered. The Roman Catholic Church has its own policy on this subject, which it will doubtless pursue, as it has a right to. No statement of any other policy has been offered except by individuals, or possibly by very small political Conventions. Under the direction of the Council, your Committee have had some conference with gentlemen of different denominations, who have interested themselves in religious education, to know if some common statement of the American idea in regard to public education might not be attained, which may perhaps solve all difficulties, at least which may make the discussion before the people more simple. We believe that there is a wide desire for some such common statement. And we propose the reference of the subject of the public education in its relations to religious education to a special committee of ten, with permission to confer with persons representing other religious organizations in the hope of an approach to union of the public sentiment on questions of public education.

We offer the following Resolutions:—

*Resolved*, That this Conference desires to cultivate the most friendly relations with all Christian Churches, and would encourage fraternal intercourse between them; and that a committee of three be appointed to represent these sentiments, and to consider all questions which relate to mutual intercourse and co-operation.

*Resolved*, That this committee be empowered to appoint delegates representing this Body, to visit and confer with the other liberal religious Organizations on the occasion of their annual or other large conventions abroad and at home.

*Resolved*, That a committee of ten be appointed, to whom is referred the subject of Public Education, in its relations to Religious Education; with permission to confer with persons connected with

other religious Organizations, in the hope of an approach to a union of the public sentiment on questions of public education.

For the Committee,

E. E. HALE,  
*Chairman.*

The First and Second of these Resolutions were adopted without debate, and subsequently Rev. Messrs. Eli Fay, Charles Lowe, and Robert Collyer were appointed the Committee on Fellowship. The Third was discussed at length by Rev. Messrs. E. E. Hale, H. W. Bellows, S. J. May, Oscar Clute, C. G. Ames, W. O. White, H. C. Badger, Frederic Hinckley, and Messrs. John E. Williams, Thomas Coggeshall, William H. Baldwin, and Richard Warren; and was finally adopted.

On motion of Rev. E. E. Hale,

*Voted.* That the above-named Committee of ten be appointed by the Chair.

And the Chair subsequently appointed: Rev. James DeNormandie, George B. Emerson, Rev. J. W. Chadwick, Rev. E. E. Hale, Rev. George W. Briggs, D.D., Rev. S. K. Lothrop, D.D., Rev. A. D. Mayo, Prof. F. J. Child, John E. Williams, Arthur T. Lyman,— with power to fill vacancies.

After the singing of the doxology, Rev. E. E. Hale pronounced the Benediction.

Adjourned at 10 o'clock.

#### THURSDAY MORNING SESSION.

The Conference was called to order at 10 o'clock.

Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D.D., offered prayer.

The Chair announced that, with the assent of the parties interested, a change had been made in the order for the day as already announced; and that the floor would first be given to Rev. Mr. Hepworth to present the Resolution of Rev. Mr. Putnam.

Rev. George H. Hepworth then moved to amend Article IX. of the Constitution by substituting for the Article, as it now stands, the following:—

ARTICLE IX. Re-affirming our allegiance to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to secure the largest unity of the spirit and the widest practical co-operation, we invite to our fellowship all who profess and call themselves Christians.

The proposed amendment was discussed by Rev. Messrs. Hepworth, Lowe, Clarke, Calthrop, Nightingale, and Joseph May.

Rev. Joseph May moved, as an amendment to the motion of Rev. Mr. Hepworth, to amend Article IX. by adding to it the words: "provided, that nothing in this Article be construed to remove the Conference from a Christian basis," so that the entire Article would read as follows:—

ARTICLE IX. To secure the largest unity of the spirit and the widest practical co-operation, it is hereby declared that all the declarations of this Conference, including the Preamble and Constitution, are expressions only of its majority, committing in no degree those who object to them, and dependent wholly for their effect upon the consent they command on their own merits from the churches here represented, or belonging within the circle of our fellowship, — provided that nothing in this Article be construed to remove the Conference from a Christian basis.

The discussion was continued by Rev. Messrs. Hale and Frederick Frothingham.

Rev. Frederick Frothingham moved to amend the amendment of Rev. Joseph May, by so amending Article IX. that it would read as follows:—

ARTICLE IX. Re-affirming our allegiance to the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and, to secure the largest unity of the spirit, and the widest practical co-operation, we invite to our fellowship all who would unite with Jesus in building God's Kingdom.

The discussion was continued by Rev. Messrs. Bellows, Collier, Chadwick, White, and Mr. Coggeshall.

Rev. H. C. Badger moved that the previous question be not moved in this debate before four o'clock, P. M. Rev. Dr.



Collier moved as an amendment that the previous question be not allowed at all in this debate. After brief discussion by Rev. Messrs. Nightingale and Badger, and Mr. Thomas Coggeshall, Rev. Dr. Collier's amendment was carried.

Rev. Mr. Hepworth offered to alter his amendment by substituting for the words: *all who profess and call themselves Christians*, the words: *all churches which profess and call themselves Christians*.

Rev. Mr. Putnam spoke.

The Chair ruled the proposed change out of order.

The debate was resumed by Mr. D. L. Shorey.

Rev. Joseph May asked leave to withdraw his amendment in favor of Mr. Hepworth's last proposition.

Objected to.

Adjourned for lunch in the vestry.

#### THURSDAY AFTERNOON SESSION.

The President called the Conference to order at two o'clock.

Secretary Wells announced that two hundred and twenty-three churches and associations were represented by six hundred and seven accredited delegates.

The hymn "Love divine" was sung.

Rev. Frederick Frothingham offered prayer.

Mr. J. H. Mitchell moved that the question be taken at a quarter before four o'clock.

Carried.

Rev. S. J. May read the following

#### STATEMENT OF THE POSITION AND PRINCIPLES OF UNITARIANS.

From the first of our existence as a denomination, especially throughout the last fifty years, we Unitarians have, on all occasions, avowed ourselves Christians, and have published our distinctive opinions in countless books and tracts. Yet more

than this, we have been laboring diligently, at no little cost, to expose and expel the substitutes for Christianity that have so long been accepted throughout Christendom, and bring our fellow-Christians of every other sect back to Jesus of Nazareth, as the best teacher of true religion.

It would, therefore, be superfluous — idle at the present time — to make any proclamation of our claim to a place among Christian sects. If our words and acts for the last fifty years do not satisfy our contemporaries — friends and opponents — that we have faith in Christ, how can we hope to convince them by any brief declaration to that effect now?

As the founder of Christianity did not see fit to prescribe a creed, or insist upon any theological dogma as the essentials of religion, we deem it presumptuous in any churches or sects, that would be called Christian, to make a creed or system of theology the basis of their union and fellowship.

Jesus taught theology, if at all, only incidentally. But he earnestly inculcated divine principles of conduct, speech, temper, thought; insisting upon obedience to them as the essentials of his religion. We therefore deem it the wisest and safest course for all who would guide and help men in the way of salvation to do as the Great Teacher did, *i. e.* urge upon men the strictest obedience to all the laws of righteousness, purity, and benevolence, — leaving theological dogmas, which have ever been, and probably ever will be, matters of doubtful disputation, to be studied by such persons as have time and inclination to study them; according to them, individually, the right to believe whatever they may be fully persuaded in their own minds is true, and to reject whatever they may be fully persuaded is false.

Unitarians have always maintained that not what a man professes to believe, but the principles upon which he habitually acts, will show whether he is or is not a dear child of our Heavenly Father, — which was all Jesus desired to make of any one. The man whose belief impels and strengthens him habitually “to work righteousness,” revere God, and “to do justly, love mercy, walk humbly”; “to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly in the world,” — that man, whatever may be his opinions, has attained to a saving faith; he is accepted with God, and should be accepted with all God’s people on earth.

We Unitarians confide in Jesus Christ as the best teacher of true righteousness, the surest guide to salvation, the brightest

example of personal godliness, the mark of our high calling. Most of us revere Him as our Lord and Master, but we remember, and are cautioned by His words: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in Heaven." We remember, too, that in his account of the future judgment, no intimation is given that any will be condemned for not having acknowledged his authority; but those are represented as receiving the awful sentence who have refused or neglected to obey the two great commandments: namely, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbor," that is, thy fellow man, "as thyself"; we remember these instructions of Jesus too well, and are too much impressed by them to venture ourselves, or on the authority of our sect, to reject or to denounce those who call themselves Christians, because they seem to us to undervalue Christ and to deny his supremacy in the church, if they are obviously laboring to establish the kingdom of God on earth.

Our toleration and charity have been so much exercised and stretched in our judgment of fellow-Christians who have gone to the opposite extreme in their theological opinions, that we cannot withhold the same toleration from the most radical of our brethren. If we consent to recognize as Christians, as we cordially do, those disciples of Augustin and Calvin whose creeds so plainly imply that God is a most selfish, wantonly cruel, and inexorable tyrant, shall we refuse — can we consistently refuse — to be equally lenient towards those of our own denomination who do not believe Jesus to have been supernaturally inspired, a divine man, or an infallible teacher, if we see that they are sincere and earnest in the search after the truth of God? Whosoever sees fit to call himself by the name of our Saviour we must receive as a professed Christian, whatever he may think of Christ; but obviously he only is a true Christian, whose life is governed by the precepts, and animated and sustained by the spirit of Jesus, whether he is conscious of his indebtedness to Him.

Rev. John Corder moved that speeches be limited to five minutes.

Lost, after slight debate.

The discussion on amendments to the Ninth Article, was then continued by Rev. Messrs. Muzzey, Spaulding, William G. Eliot,

Vickers, Badger, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Rev. Messrs. Putnam, Ames, T. L. Eliot, and Mrs. C. H. Dall.

Rev. Mr. Frothingham, by permission of the Conference, withdrew his amendment.

The hour for taking the vote having arrived, after some discussion on technicalities, and an ineffectual attempt to take the vote by count, the Conference decided to take the vote by polling; the question being upon the amendment of Rev. Joseph May.

The Chair appointed Rev. Messrs. Collier, Spaulding, Wells, and Batchelor, tellers.

The amendment of Rev. Mr. May was carried. 224 to 218.

Rev. S. W. McDaniel moved a reconsideration.

The motion to reconsider was discussed by Messrs. Warren, Bellows, J. E. Williams, C. Y. DeNormandie, S. W. McDaniel, Chaney, Vickers, Joseph May, Hale, Greely, and Collier.

*Voted*, To lay on the table the motion to reconsider.

The Chair decided that the question now would be whether Rev. Joseph May's amendment should become a part of the Constitution. The majority had decided that this amendment was preferred to Rev. Mr. Hepworth's, but a two-thirds vote would be necessary to make it part of the Constitution.

A debate ensued, in which Rev. Messrs. Bellows, Lowe, Calthrop, Putnam, Ames, Thomas L. Eliot, Clarke, Wells, Hepworth, S. R. Priest, and Mr. G. W. Warren participated.

A motion by Mr. Coggeshall to adjourn to the evening was lost.

In response to inquiry from Rev. Mr. Badger, the Chair decided that the two-thirds vote required by the Constitution was not of *all* accredited delegates, but of all accredited delegates *present* and *voting*; this being in accordance with a decision made by the late Hon. Thomas D. Eliot, who presided at the session of 1868.



The yeas and nays being called for, the roll was called, with the following result: Yeas, 216; Nays, 189. And 270 being necessary for its passage, Mr. May's amendment was defeated.

It being now seven o'clock, it was voted to omit the evening session, and adjourn to Friday morning at ten o'clock, with the understanding that Rev. Mr. Hepworth then have the floor.

#### FRIDAY MORNING SESSION.

The Conference met at ten o'clock, the President in the chair.

After the singing of a hymn, prayer was offered by Rev. H. C. Bates.

Rev. E. E. Hale, from the Committee on Business, presented a report recommending the adoption of the following rules:—

Every new proposition for the amendment of the Constitution, or a Statement of Principles, may be introduced by the mover.

After such introduction, only two speeches shall be permitted on each motion, of five minutes each.

After discussion by Rev. Messrs. J. A. Buckingham and H. C. Badger, the rules were adopted.

The President spoke as follows:—I have, without consultation with any one, come to a decision in regard to the ruling which I shall make, in the present posture of affairs. I am satisfied that the hearts of the members of this Conference beat substantially together, and I feel that it is not for the interest of this Conference, or for the interest of our denomination, that there should be any ruling here which shall exclude any persons from a fair expression of opinion. The decision to which I have come is this, and I have written it down in order that there may be no mistake about it.

Owing to the Constitution of this Conference, the proceedings are somewhat anomalous, and when amendments are proposed to the Constitution, and amendments shall be proposed to the original proposition, amounting, as in the present, to a substitute, the first question virtually is, What shall be first acted

upon as an amendment to the Constitution? and the vote is taken upon the several amendments as a preliminary step.

If the vote is a majority in favor of the amendment to the original proposition, the effect is, that the amendment so adopted shall be first acted upon; and if this is adopted as a part of the Constitution, the original proposition is defeated without a further vote. If the amendment to the original proposition fails to be adopted as a part of the Constitution, the question then returns, Shall the original proposition be made a part of the Constitution? Under the vote of yesterday this can hardly be considered open to debate. Before the question is taken upon the proposition, it is proper for the mover to modify or withdraw it by general consent, or it may be done by a majority vote of the Conference.

Rev. Geo. H. Hepworth moved that the Constitution be amended by eliminating Article IX., and substituting the following:—

ARTICLE IX. Re-affirming our allegiance to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and desiring to secure the largest unity of the spirit and the widest practical co-operation, we invite to our fellowship all who wish to be followers of Christ.

The motion was seconded by Rev. S. R. Calthrop.

On motion of Mr. J. H. Mitchell,

*Voted*, That when the vote is taken it be taken by count.

After a brief discussion, in which several delegates participated, the amendment proposed by Mr. Hepworth was adopted by two hundred and sixty-seven in the affirmative to thirty-three in the negative.

The Secretary read the following communication from a Committee of the General-Convention of Universalists:—

NEW YORK, Oct. 21, 1870.

HON. HENRY CHAPIN, *President of the Unitarian National Conference*:

Dear Sir and Brother, — At the Annual Session of the General Convention of the Universalist Church, held in Gloucester, Mass., in September last, a Committee from your body, consisting of Revs. E. E. Hale and Chas. Lowe, presented themselves with a letter of kindly Christian greeting and fraternal wishes. That

letter was received by the Convention with great satisfaction, as were also the very cordial words spoken by the Rev. Mr. Hale.

The undersigned were appointed by the Convention to convey to the Conference, over which you preside, its acknowledgment of the fraternal courtesy and feeling so well expressed by your Committee, and to assure the clergy and laity of the Unitarian church of its most earnest desire that that church, in all its efforts to further the kingdom of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, should be abundantly prospered and enlarged.

With great respect we are, fraternally yours,

J. M. PULLMAN,  
A. ST. JOHN CHAMBRE,

*Com. of the Gen'l Con. of Universalists.*

Rev. Frederick Frothingham presented the following

#### DECLARATION.

The National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches, recognizing that the movement of which those churches are the expression, like all other great providential movements, may have a meaning greater than any or all of its members are aware, and disclaiming for itself and denying to any man or body of men the right or the authority to prescribe any binding creed or test of Christian character or acceptance with God, distinctly declines to lay down any basis of Christian recognition or of Unitarian fellowship, or to make any final and irrevocable statement of theological truth. Instead of this, to set forth more clearly, explain and justify the Unitarian position, it makes the following affirmations, embodying, so far as it now sees, the cardinal principles and leading ideas held in the Unitarian body, but carrying no authority, save as the opinion of this Conference, and distinctly held subject to correction, revision, modification or enlargement, as new attainments of truth and light may require.

It affirms, then :

*First.* That it is the indefeasible right and duty of every human being to form his own creed, — a right which no power can take away, a duty that can be delegated to no other. And it is the duty of all to respect and guard him in the exercise and results of that right.

*Second.* That not creed but character, not profession but life, determines standing as a Christian or a child of God.

*Third.* That Righteousness — personal, social, universal — is the essence and the aim of true religion, essential to happiness, progress, salvation; and for which there is and can be no substitute, whether it be of faith or of another's righteousness.

*Fourth.* That God is One, not in Trinity, but in Infinity, one in his being, his counsels, his law, his providence, his ways and works.

*Fifth.* That God is the universal Father, absolutely wise, just and beautiful, immanent in his universe, and open always to the access of all his children.

*Sixth.* That man is by nature and purpose God's child, cared for with parental care, and in training by the discipline of life for holiness, blessedness, heaven on earth and in the life beyond the grave.

*Seventh.* That the voice of God in the soul of man is for the individual the supreme law, the highest authority, the final arbiter; that the only essential creed is loyalty to its command, and that no other person has a right or authority to take its place.

*Eighth.* That punishment is corrective, not vindictive — inseparable, therefore, from sin, and to be borne by no substitute; no more eternal, therefore, than sin is eternal.

*Ninth.* That, expressly accepting for our own the religion of Jesus, and the Bible as the record of its pre-natal and initial history, we regard it as not the enemy, but the friend of all other religions. As we recognize God in Christ, so we gladly recognize him in every other form of honest faith.

*Tenth.* That, while holding firmly our own conviction, and the right of every mind to interpret Christianity according to its own conscience, we gladly acknowledge and welcome the Christian spirit of life under all the forms of the Christian confession.

*Eleventh.* That the religion of Jesus is not a closed and exclusive gospel, but an open and progressive life.

*Twelfth.* That with these views, declining to make final and dogmatic answer to open questions, and watching and waiting always for new light, our aim is, specially, to maintain and illustrate the Unity of the Spirit in diversity of form, and generally and supremely, to unite with all God's children in building up his kingdom. Thus we are Unitarians, as affirming that spirit which unites man to man and man to God, and God's unity in all.

Mr. Frothingham offered this resolution: —

*Resolved,* That this declaration, together with that presented by Rev. S. J. May, be referred to a Committee of eight, to be nominated by the Chair: such Committee to consider and report whether it be expedient to make any declaration; and if they



deem it advisable, to prepare and report such declaration at the next meeting of this Conference.

The resolution was seconded by Rev. J. W. Chadwick.

Rev. John Cordner offered the following

### STATEMENT.

Holding Christian truth to be infinite in its nature and in its applications, we decline any attempt to embody it in formulated statements of saving faith. In response, however, to inquirers concerning our doctrines and our principles, as Unitarian Christians; we refer, firstly, to the teachings and the life of Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament, as our fundamental statement; and, secondly, in exposition and illustration thereof, to meet the wants of the present day, to the tracts already published by the American Unitarian Association.

After discussion by Messrs. Beane, Sprague, Nightingale, Frothingham, Chadwick, Calthrop, Warren, and Bellows, Rev. Mr. Cordner temporarily withdrew his statement.

The resolution to refer the statements of Messrs. May and Frothingham to a committee of eight was then adopted; and the Chair subsequently appointed the Committee as follows: Rev. S. J. May, Rev. J. F. Clarke, D.D., Rev. H. W. Bellows, D.D., Rev. John Cordner, Rev. Geo. H. Hepworth, Rev. J. W. Chadwick, Rev. S. R. Calthrop, Rev. Frederick Frothingham.

Rev. Mr. Cordner renewed his statement.

Rev. S. W. Bush moved to refer the statement to the above committee.

Rev. Dr. Collier moved to lay this motion on the table. Carried.

Rev. Mr. Chadwick spoke.

Rev. S. W. McDaniel moved an indefinite postponement of the whole question. Lost.

After discussion by Messrs. Putnam, McCauley, Bellows, Clarke, Lowe, W. G. Eliot, and Cordner, — on motion of Mr. Cordner,

*Voted*, To refer Mr. Cordner's Statement to the above committee of eight.

Rev. F. W. Webber moved that the Committee be instructed to add four laymen to their number.

Mr. Mitchell moved as an amendment, that the four additional members of the Committee be appointed by the Chair. Carried.

Mr. Webber's motion was then passed as amended; and the chair subsequently appointed Henry P. Kidder, George Wm. Curtis, Wm. B. Weeden, Joseph Shippen.

Rev. Charles Lowe offered the following Resolution, which was unanimously adopted: —

*Resolved*, That this Conference receives with great satisfaction the letter of greeting from the Universalist Convention, and we rejoice in the cordial relations which exist between that body and ourselves in our advocacy of the great principles of Liberal Christianity.

Rev. A. J. Rich offered the following Resolution: —

*Resolved*, That this Conference approve the action of such churches of the Unitarian faith as have adopted and published a statement of their religious belief; and would recommend to the several other Unitarian churches, Conferences, and individuals to pursue a similar course, not as an unalterable expression of belief or as a test of Christian fellowship, but as a means of satisfying the demands of the public, and removing any misunderstanding or prejudice others may entertain in respect of Unitarian sentiments, and, as an ultimate end, the popularizing and spreading of Liberal Christianity more widely and rapidly throughout the land.

Rev. S. W. McDaniel moved to lay this Resolution on the table. Lost.

Rev. E. E. Hale moved to refer the Resolution to the above Committee of twelve. Carried.

Mr. Sprague moved that all Statements of Faith now in the hands of Delegates be referred, without reading, to the same Committee. Carried.

Prof. Charles C. Everett read the following

## REPORT UPON THE WORK OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

The relation of this Conference to the American Unitarian Association is a delicate and important one. It has no power over it, and the attempt to exert such power would be an impertinence. Yet the counsels and suggestions which this Conference may present to the Association may be productive of good, and the word which it may utter to the churches in its behalf may arouse them to new life and interest.

The Association is simply an agency to bring together need and abundance. Here, on the one hand, are our rich and well-to-do churches; and here, on the other, are feeble churches, or churches just struggling into life, to which a little help would be the boon of existence. Here are the great thoughts of strong and earnest minds; and here are communities to which these thoughts would be as the very bread of life. Here are men eager to work for the kingdom of God, and here is a world waiting for such workers. How shall this abundance and this necessity be brought together? Shall our rich churches live in selfish enjoyment of their riches, or send out each its separate messengers of search and inquiry? Shall these poorer churches each send its messengers of entreaty treading the weary round of application and explanation? The Unitarian Association is simply an agency to bring these two elements together. It surveys the whole field. It estimates the comparative necessities of one place and another, reports to the churches able to help, and makes itself the channel of their gifts. It is our "city set upon a hill that cannot be hid." It is our "candle lighted and put on a candlestick," or, rather, it is a beacon light which we have kindled that shines far and wide over the waste.

A work like that which the Association undertakes is beset with difficulties. On the one side, it is beset with applications for help more than it can meet. Each one of these applications would open, it may be, a field of usefulness; for where a single man calls for a preacher of the Liberal faith, there is an opening where, at least, the sharp point of the wedge can enter. And on the other side, the Association represents a varied and somewhat turbulent constituency. It has, therefore, on this side to meet the pressure of conflicting advice and criticism from men

who have each his own plans and ideas, and feel that the Association will be a failure if it does not conform to them.

What can be done under these circumstances? Suppose that on account of these difficulties we should give up the Association. Our liberal faith would then have no common channel for its life and energy. Instead of one strong current, we should have a number of trickling rills, trying each to make a channel for itself, but for the most part losing themselves in the sands. While if we undertook to establish another agency to take the place of this, or if this Conference should undertake the work, the new movement would involve all the difficulties that beset the old, for they are inherent in the very nature of the case. This is a matter which our churches will do well to consider. The man who would cripple and repress the life of the Association, because all of its measures do not satisfy him, aims a blow at the life of our Unitarian churches. He, who, for this reason, discourages his people from contributing to its means, or even does not encourage them to contribute, not merely keeps back so much money, but does an injury to the life of his own church and to neighboring churches which is even greater than that done to the Association. If this injury can be atoned for, it is in only one way, viz., by making his church a leader in missionary enterprise at home, by raising at least double the money that could have been raised for the Association, and applying it to work similar to that which the Association would perform.

The first duty, then, of this Conference towards the Association is to kindle in the churches a fresh interest in its behalf. Each church has, I know, work of its own to be accomplished in its own neighborhood. But each church will catch the spirit of the common life, and the more that is done through the Association the more will each do for itself.

The next duty of this Conference in regard to the Association is to consider its general plan of work, and to recommend any particular objects to its attention. To go beyond this, to attempt to suggest fixed rules that should govern its action in any class of cases, would be to attempt the impossible. The first thing the student of any art has to do is to learn certain general rules. The second is to learn to forget them. General rules cannot adapt themselves to the manifoldness of nature and of life. The American Unitarian Association is an agency established for a certain practical result. The accomplishment of this result can furnish its only invariable rule of action. For us, had we the power, to prescribe to its officers certain



invariable rules of action, would be simply to tie their hands. These officers must be free to meet every case as it arises.

There is, indeed, a convenience in holding loosely certain general principles or rules of action, but these must be subject to continual violations. One of the best of such general principles is one adopted by the Association, according to which, other things being equal, it expends money most freely in places where young men or women are gathered for study. Another, which has been adopted to some extent, is to give money for the support of preachers rather than for the building of churches. But neither of these rules can be held absolutely. The question, for instance, as to the relative importance of the two methods of action last referred to, in regard to every case that may arise, cannot be definitely settled beforehand. For us to attempt to decide it, would be as if a convention of fishermen should attempt to decide the question whether it was advisable to fish by the aid of the seine or the line. The only answer would be that it depends upon the location and the kind of fish. I have known a little money given by the Association for the purpose of completing a church, to be the means of establishing strong and permanent societies, and to return a hundred-fold harvest. I think, indeed, that our new societies do not often realize the advantage of holding their meetings for a time in a public hall. The freedom of the hall will bring in many who would have avoided any church, as well as many who would have avoided an heretical church. But there comes a time when the *church* is needed to give to the movement the guarantee of permanence. And I would not have the Association tie its hands so that it cannot, in any case, help on this final movement.

But, unquestionably, when the whole field is considered, the support of men will form a much larger part of the work of the Association than the building of churches. Men carry life. The churches only furnish the channel for the life, and if the life is strong enough it will make a channel for itself. What church walls could accomplish the work that our missionary is doing at Ann Arbor? Perhaps no money expended for the cause brings in a richer harvest. But this differs only in degree, not in kind, from that which every true man is doing wherever he may be placed. Even books are only a poor makeshift to supply the place of the men who wrote them.

But if the sending forth of men to preach the great truths of liberal Christianity forms so large a part of the work of the As-

sociation, the question presses itself, "What sort of men shall be sent?" To this question, also, however important, no direct and absolute answer can be given. We can indeed form in our minds the picture of the man whom the Association would do well to send forth. Every little parish that wants the "right man" sent to it, feeling that there, more than any where else, he would be in the right place, has such a picture in its mind. But Paul and Channing have passed away. Those who are doing their work best in the present age are for the most part fixed in some sphere of labor. Our ideal picture goes for little. We must simply take things as they are, and make the best of them, and say that the Association must choose the best material it has at its command, and do the best it can with it.

But is it not possible to apply to the men sent forth to do the work of the Association some test of theological belief? Does not the Association, by employing men whose theologic conceptions, whose theories, for instance, in regard to the nature of Jesus differ, work at cross purposes? Does it not tear down with one hand what it builds up with the other? And is not a person contributing to the funds of the Association liable to have his gift applied to the support of men, some of whose theologic views would differ from his own?

To meet these difficulties aright we must rise to the full comprehension of our position and our work. If theories in regard to the nature of Christ are of more importance than the religion which Christ taught, and the work which he began, then uniformity in regard to such theories is the one thing to be sought. But if the religion which Jesus taught, and the work to which he calls us, are of infinitely greater moment than any theories about his nature, then fitness to preach this religion and to do this work is the one important thing; and men can unite in doing the work of Jesus, while their theories about him differ. This last position was that of Jesus himself, as implied in his great self-forgetful utterance: "Whoso speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him; but whoso speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." This was the principle of the fathers of our denomination. To them, to "preach Christ" was not to preach the truth about Christ, but the truth of Christ. They looked with a certain scorn at the bodies of Christian believers who wasted their strength in theologic controversy, in hair-splitting about dogmas, while the world was lying in suffering and sin. For us to give up this principle would be to give up our best life and opportunity. To seek to

change the policy of the Association in this respect would be to bring it down to the level of the warring sects.

Certainly all men are not alike fitted to do the work of the Association. It wants men who have caught the spirit of Jesus. It wants men who shall preach positively and not negatively what they know, and not what they do not know; what they believe, and not what they do not believe; who shall preach their faith, and not their doubts. A man who will send his congregation away feeling that he does not believe this, and doubts of that, and makes a mock of this other, is not the man on whom the Association can rely to do its work. But the man who sends his congregation away feeling that he does believe one single fundamental religious truth, and feeling their own faith in this truth made stronger by contact with his faith, who sends them away quickened in the purpose, or the longing for a true and earnest life, he may be sent forth as a preacher of religion, whether his abstract theories square with any standard we may set up, or not.

But here again the Association has not an army of perfect saints at its command. It has true and noble men, but perfection is as rare here as elsewhere. It must simply do the best it can. It has doubtless made mistakes, for it could not avoid them. Moreover, a single mistake or failure in a man it has sent forth, does not prove his incompetence, and to throw a man away after a single trial would sometimes be to throw away one of the most efficient instruments of our faith. These are matters which can be determined only by good judgment in every particular case, and not to be reached by any arbitrary rule.

In what I have said I believe I have stated what has been the general policy of the Association, and I believe that it is the only policy which the great mass of our body would approve. I believe that the joy with which our churches learned that the Secretary of the Association had decided to remain at his post did not spring merely from personal regards. These mingled in it very largely, it is true; but the predominant element sprang from the consciousness that the policy which he was pursuing as the only one which would be worthy of our liberal faith. But while our churches have confidence in the Association and in its officers, and sympathize with them in their views and in their work, I believe they have small idea of the good which the Association is accomplishing, and still less of the greater good which it is forced to leave undone. They need to be made to

feel more deeply the greatness of the opportunities which open before us, and our failure to take advantage of so many of these opportunities for the lack of the means furnished. They should be made to feel more deeply how the officers of the Association are forced to balance one opportunity against another, and when they do one thing to leave a hundred others undone.

I have left myself no space to speak in fit terms of the work of the Association in publishing and circulating books and tracts. I refer to it here simply to make one suggestion. It is this: that the Association should use its agencies, not merely for the distribution of its own publications, but also for distributing any works of a purely religious nature, which it may think fitted for its purposes. Its object is the promotion of liberal religion, and it should leave unused no instruments suitable for the accomplishment of this object.

A great subject was assigned to me, and I have been able to touch only upon one or two points which have seemed to me of chief importance. In conclusion, I will repeat that I think that the duty of this Conference towards the Association is to suggest to it such special objects as it may think worthy of special attention, but not to attempt to lay down for it any abstract and arbitrary rules of action, and, least of all, to propose any radical change in its policy and work. Especially does it owe to the Association the duty of stimulating afresh the interest of the churches in its behalf, and of devising means to enlarge its resources. This Conference has no agencies of its own through which it may act. Its power is purely advisory. But mere advice in this world goes for little. The Conference can justify its existence only so far as it makes itself the centre of a fresh enthusiasm for the Christian work. This it did at its beginning, and this is what the churches are expecting from it to-day.

Rev. J. F. W. Ware, of Baltimore, read the following as a supplemental report:—

The Committee appointed at a meeting of the officers of the Local Conferences, held in Boston, September, 1870, to consider the subject of the annual contributions to the American Unitarian Association and the best methods of raising funds, and to report to the National Conference, beg leave to say that they believe that experience proves it expedient to designate some Sunday in the year as collection Sunday, and that, on the whole, the second Sunday in November is found to be the most desirable day.



They would call attention to the plan as originally proposed, that this day shall supplement and conclude all other agencies and activities of the year; is the last stroke to a year's work, and by no means the whole work. There may be good reasons why some parishes should select another time and their own ways for making their contributions, yet may we not have this one settlement day, as the summing up of all the year's activities, after which the societies shall report to the Treasurer of the Association, and not only the work of the Association be simplified and facilitated thereby, but that magnetic something be infused into our societies and sect which comes of unity, not merely in purpose but in act?

They would suggest a method adopted by some societies, with marked success,—the appointment of a committee of (from six to twelve) ladies and gentlemen, who shall call upon every member of the society to subscribe such sums as they desire, payable either in one sum in November, or by instalments through the year. While they consider it the duty of the clergy to call attention to and urge action upon this matter, they believe the work lies with laymen and women. The Committee so constituted, they believe, should be a permanent Committee, always in existence and always in earnest. It will be far more likely to be successful than one chosen at or near the time to do the work, report, and retire. Each Committee should be a standing part of every society organization.

The plan of a direct appeal to large societies by some of our leading clergymen, adopted two years ago, met with such marked success as leads the Committee to recommend that such appeals be made from time to time to the strong societies of the denomination.

Your Committee believe that denominational success largely depends upon the heartiness and unity with which the churches shall furnish the Unitarian Association with the pecuniary means for carrying out the various purposes by which it trusts to be an instrument of power and success in forwarding the interests of a Liberal Christianity.

Respectfully submitted,

JAS. MURRAY HOWE,  
HAPGOOD WRIGHT,  
JOHN F. W. WARE.

On motion of Rev. Dr. Bellows, the report read by Prof. Everett was accepted, and ordered to be printed with the published proceedings of the Conference.

Rev. Dr. Bellows then moved the acceptance of the report read by Mr. Ware, and that it be published in connection with that of Prof. Everett.

Carried, after a speech by Mr. Hapgood Wright.

The following resolutions were proposed by the Business Committee:—

*Resolved*, That in view of the great and growing opportunity of making known the principles and spirit of Unitarian Christianity, we earnestly recommend every church and society within the circle of our fellowship to use all due diligence in raising funds which shall enable the American Unitarian Association to meet the great call from all quarters for the knowledge of the truths which we hold dear.

*Resolved*, That the churches be requested to raise \$100,000 for the use of the American Unitarian Association next year, and that we approve the suggestion of the Committee that the second Sunday in November shall be known as "Collection Sunday."

Adopted.

Rev. J. B. Moore, of Lawrence, Mass., Secretary of the Nominating Committee, presented the following list of officers of the Conference for the next two years:—

*President* — E. Rockwood Hoar, Concord, Mass.

*Vice-Presidents* — George Wm. Curtis, New York; Daniel L. Shorey, Chicago, Ill.; George Partridge, St. Louis, Mo.; Manning F. Force, Cincinnati, O.; Joseph H. Choate, New York; Seth Padelford, Providence, R. I.

*Recording Secretary* — Rev. Benj. H. Bailey, Portland, Me.

*Statistical Secretary* — Rev. Augustus Woodbury, Providence, R. I.

*Corresponding Secretary* — Rev. John D. Wells, Quincy, Mass.

*Assistant Secretary* — Rev. W. H. Fish, South Scituate, Mass.

*Treasurer* — Henry P. Kidder, Boston, Mass.

*Council* — Rev. Dr. Henry W. Bellows, New York; Rev. E. E. Hale, Boston, Mass.; Artemas Carter, Chicago, Ill.; Rev. Dr. Jas. Freeman Clarke, Boston, Mass.; Rev. Geo. H. Hepworth, New York; Frederick E. Clarke, Lawrence, Mass.; Rev. C. A. Staples, Chicago, Ill.; Robert S. Rantoul, Salem, Mass.; Wm. B. Weeden, Providence, R. I.; Geo. O. Shattuck, Boston, Mass.

The report was accepted and adopted.

Rev. S. W. McDaniel offered the following resolution:—

*Resolved*, That the Secretaries of the Local Conferences who have made verbal reports, or have failed to report at all, be requested to furnish to the Secretary of the National Conference full written statements of the condition of the churches which they represent, for publication in the proceedings.

Adopted.

Rev. E. E. Hale moved the appointment by the Chair of a Committee to take up a collection to meet the expense of printing the Report, etc.

Carried, and the Chair appointed Rev. Dr. Eliot, Rev. Geo. H. Hepworth, C. C. Smith, and Arthur T. Lyman.

Rev. C. A. Staples offered the following Resolution:—

*Resolved*, That as members of the National Conference, and as Unitarian Christians, we desire to express our gratitude to the Rev. Chas. Lowe for his administration of the affairs of the American Unitarian Association, and hereby pledge him our sympathy and hearty co-operation in the future.

Adopted unanimously.

Rev. Geo. W. Briggs, D.D., offered the following Resolution:

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this body be given to our brother, Rev. Dr. Eliot, for his sermon on the first evening of the Conference.

Adopted unanimously.

Rev. E. E. Hale, at the request of the Council, offered the following Resolution:—

*Resolved*, That each Local Conference be asked to create a special Committee of Fellowship for the examination of candidates for our ministry; who shall test their natural competency, acquirements, and moral and religious character, and only when satisfied of these, grant letters of admission into the Christian ministry and the Unitarian pulpit, it being understood that no dogmatic test shall be applied.

Adopted.

Also the two following:—

*Resolved*, That some uniform letter or diploma be devised by the Council which the Local Conferences shall be invited to accept

and furnish to approved candidates, and it is recommended that this letter shall everywhere be regarded as an indispensable testimonial, by Church Committees and Councils to be required of all persons claiming the functions of Christian preacher or pastor.

*Resolved*, That candidates for our ministry from the ministry of other Christian bodies shall be expected to pass one term at one of our theological schools, and that the overseers of those schools be requested by the Conference to receive them gratuitously for that period, so far as tuition is concerned.

Lost, — after discussion by Messrs. McCauley, C. C. Everett, Badger, Bellows, Staples, Clarke, and Hale.

On motion of Rev. E. E. Hale,

*Voted*, That the Report on Antioch College be referred to the Council.

By invitation of the Business Committee, the Rev. S. H. Taft made a statement in regard to the condition and prospects of Humboldt College, Iowa, and an appeal in its behalf.

Rev. E. E. Hale offered the following Resolutions: —

*Resolved*, That this Conference recognize in Humboldt College a most important instrumentality for the promotion of liberal education and Christianity, and it is hereby earnestly recommended to the practical sympathy of all Liberal Christians.

*Resolved*, That it is respectfully recommended to the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association that it should appoint and sustain one or more Professors in the above-named institution, when requested to do so by the Trustees, and to render such other aid as shall be deemed wise or expedient.

Mr. W. B. Weeden moved to amend the second Resolution so as to read as follows:—

*Resolved*, That it is respectfully recommended to the Executive Committee to extend any aid to the above-named Institution that they may deem expedient.

After discussion by Messrs. S. J. May, Hale, Clarke, Taft, W. G. Eliot, and Collier, the resolutions were adopted with Mr. Weeden's amendment.

Mr. D. L. Shorey offered the following Resolution: —

*Resolved*, That a committee of seven persons, consisting of W. B. Weeden, Rev. Dr. Bellows, Rev. E. E. Hale, Rev. Charles Lowe, Rev. A. P. Putnam, Hapgood Wright, and Edward Wigglesworth, be appointed to raise the sum of \$100,000 to endow the Theologi-



cal School at Chicago, and pay the same over to the Trustees of said school when established.

Adopted.

Rev. J. B. Moore presented the following Resolution:—

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Conference are due, and are hereby earnestly given to the proprietors of the St. Nicholas, Fifth Avenue, Grand Central, Metropolitan, Astor, New York, Earle's, Hoffman, Albemarle, St. James, Coleman, Grand, Everett, Clarendon, Gramercy Park, Brevoort and French's Hotels, for their generous hospitality during the sessions of the Conference, and that the Secretary be instructed to furnish them with a copy of this resolution.

Adopted.

Rev. S. R. Calthrop proposed a vote of thanks to the ladies and gentlemen who had provided the excellent entertainment in the ante-room from day to day.

Carried.

Rev. E. E. Hale offered the following Resolution:—

*Resolved*, That this Conference, in view of the importance of sustaining the missionary work of this body, through the circulation of our religious newspapers among those now unacquainted with Unitarian views, recommend to the American Unitarian Association to subscribe for one thousand copies each of the *Christian Register* and *Liberal Christian*, to be sent gratuitously to hotels, public reading rooms, colleges, steamers, and wherever the greatest likelihood seems to exist of their being seen and read.

Adopted.

Rev. E. E. Hale presented from the Council the following Resolution:—

*Resolved*, That instead of a Corresponding, a Statistical and a Recording Secretary, all the duties of those offices shall devolve on one person to be known as General Secretary, and that so much of the Fifth Article of the Constitution as hinders, be amended—viz, that in place of the words “three Secretaries, a Statistical, a Recording, and a Corresponding Secretary,” the words “a General Secretary,” be substituted.

Adopted.

Rev. E. E. Hale offered the following Resolution for the Council:—

*Resolved*, That the National Conference recommends the raising of a hundred thousand dollars, during the coming year, by sub-

scription, towards the erection of a National Missionary Church of the Unitarian faith in the Capital of the Nation ; and that a financial committee of laymen be chosen by the Council, to design and carry out the plan under the general direction of the American Unitarian Association.

Adopted.

Rev. F. A. Farley, D. D., offered the following Resolution : —

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Conference be and hereby are presented to the Hon. Judge Chapin for the faithful and impartial manner in which he has fulfilled the arduous and delicate duties of presiding officer during this present session.

Adopted unanimously.

Rev. Dr. Farley also offered a vote of thanks to the church and congregation of the Church of the Messiah for the use of their elegant and commodious house during the present session.

Carried.

After a reply from the President, the Conference adjourned one hour for lunch.

#### FRIDAY AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Conference re-assembled at 2 o'clock, and prayer was offered by Rev. Samuel J. May.

Rev. E. E. Hale introduced Bishop Brown, of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, who addressed the Conference.

Rev. E. E. Hale stated that he had received a communication from Colonel Talbot, of Washington, in relation to extending education to unfavored portions of the United States, which he moved should be referred to the Council.

Carried.

Here follows the communication of Colonel Talbot.

RESOLUTION IN FAVOR OF EXTENDING EDUCATION TO UNFAVORED PORTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES.

This resolution does not contemplate any such extensive system of aid to education, as the munificence of George Peabody has put in operation for the South. It does, however, imply that with the comparatively scanty means which it would call forth, the number of Southern youth receiving education in Northern institutions might be increased; and further, that such increase is at this juncture in the history of the United States of especial national importance.

The objection may be raised that this is not peculiarly denominational work, and that to other work the funds of the denomination ought not to be diverted.

To this objection there is ample material of reply.

It is to be remembered here, that intellectual culture tends directly, and of necessity, to liberality in religious opinion. If it be true, as Matthew Arnold asserts, that culture is the chief end of man, it is a truth cognate with the views held by Unitarians; and though no other denomination may be able to make this principle a part of their basis of denominational efforts, the Unitarians may and must, if their efforts at church extension are to be successful. To the extent intimated by this resolution at least, the denomination might safely move in that direction.

The Unitarian notion in favor of what the other denominations treat as merely secular and worldly philanthropy leads in the same way; and these two suggestions are enough so far as theory is concerned.

Looking at the matter as of practical fact, we should consider the strong disposition of individual Unitarians to bestow their generosity upon objects *not strictly denominational*. It would help the whole cause, if the Unitarian body, as far as practicable, made itself the agent of this broad charity on the part of some of its members.

It is also to be considered that there are many communities where direct effort for the extension of our denomination would now be of no avail. Such communities are not to be excluded from our benevolence. Nor should, with reference to them, measures be neglected, which though not productive at once of

an increase of Unitarianism, will tend ultimately to the diffusion of our cause in large sections where it is now scarcely known save as a heresy, much to be shunned.

Finally all action under this resolution will depend upon the liberality of our churches, and the discretion of our officers. The one there is no danger of over-stimulating; and the other may safely be intrusted, so far as the honor and welfare of the denomination are concerned, with the administration of any funds which the churches may place at its disposal for this purpose.

Rev. Thomas Timmins, recently of England, offered this Resolution:—

*Resolved*, That this Conference sends its warm congratulations to the Unitarian Christians of Great Britain and Ireland on their increasing unity and prosperity, and wishes them "God speed" in their great and holy work.

Adopted unanimously.

Rev. Mr. Hale read the following letter from Rev. Dr. Hosmer, President of Antioch College:—

Antioch affairs are all well. We have one hundred and ninety students. Our two halls for students' rooms are nearly full. We have more within college walls than have been here at any time since Horace Mann's day. We are growing stronger in our upper and college classes. Our new experiment of boarding is a success; nearly one hundred are in commons, and board will be about three dollars a week; excellent board on the plan of Cambridge, and all are pleased. Our Musical Institute is doing well under the care of Monsieur De Riekler; thirty pupils. Our chapel is now beautiful and our assemblings in it are pleasant. At prayers our number looks encouraging, and on Sundays we have an audience of about two hundred and seventy students and citizens. I hope soon to have a *Bas Relief* of Mr. Mann on the chapel wall; the gift of Mrs. Mann. Our growth must be slow. A bigoted prejudice withstands us, and the great State Universities with wealth and free tuition, especially those of Michigan and New York, draw the multitude of students; but nevertheless we hold our own and more. We are stronger each year than before.

The income from students in 1866 was \$4,800 nearly; in 1870, \$7,300. In the last four years nearly \$40,000 have been raised by gifts from a few friends who know us. \$18,000 of it



has gone to the permanent endowment, raising it from \$85,000 to \$103,000; and \$22,000 have gone to help the income from students and endowment to meet the expenditures for current expenses and improvements and additions. We had students last year from twenty-one States and Territories, and from Canada. This year also students are from places far and wide apart. The ages of our students would average twenty years, or more. Many of them, through great labors, and self-denial, are making their way to usefulness, earning their living in whole or in part. Thus far we have struggled and shown that we *can live*. Now we have a right to ask for more means that we may do more good. We ask for larger endowment, and ask it *now*, before stinted limitation kills the enthusiasm of our *teachers* and *pupils* and *friends*.

Affectionately,

G. W. HOSMER.

Rev. Dr. Bellows said: It has been suggested by the Council, that the next meeting of this National Conference should be held at Saratoga, the object being to secure some great hotel, at a moderate cost, after the summer visitors have disappeared, where the whole delegation can be under one roof, enjoy the full advantage of daily intercourse with each other, and have a great social time as well as a great public time. (Applause.) I hope the order will be passed by this Conference, that our next meeting shall be at Saratoga, if arrangements sufficiently economical can be made to approve it to the Council. I simply want the acceptance of the suggestion, which, I beg leave to say, does not come from me, but from a much more prudent and judicious man, Mr. Lowe, from whom comes much that is best in the propositions laid before this body.

The proposition was agreed to.

Rev. Frederic Hinckley, of Boston, moved that the Council be directed, at the earliest possible day, to appoint a committee on general theatre preaching.

Carried.

The doxology was sung, "From all that dwell below the skies."

Rev. Dr. Laird Collier pronounced the benediction.

Adjourned *sine die*.

# CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

OF THE

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

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### CONSTITUTION.

PREAMBLE. — *Whereas*, The great opportunities and demands for Christian labor and consecration at this time increase our sense of the obligations of all disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, to prove their faith by self-denial, and by the devotion of their lives and possessions to the service of God and the building-up of the kingdom of his Son, —

ARTICLE I. — Therefore, the Christian churches of the Unitarian faith here assembled unite themselves in a common body, to be known as the National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches, to the end of energizing and stimulating the denomination with which they are connected to the largest exertions in the cause of Christian faith and work.

ARTICLE II. — This National Conference shall be composed of such delegates, elected once in two years, not to exceed three from any church, including its minister, who shall officially be one, as any of our churches may accredit to it by a certificate of their appointment.

ARTICLE III. — The American Unitarian Association, the Western Conference, and such other theological, academic, or humane organizations in our body as the Conference may see fit to invite, shall be entitled to representation by not more than three delegates each.

ARTICLE IV. — The Conference shall meet biennially at such time and place as it may designate at its successive biennial sessions.

ARTICLE V. — Its officers shall consist of a President; six Vice-Presidents; a General Secretary; a Treasurer; and a Council of ten, half ministers and half laymen; who shall be elected at each meeting, to hold their offices for two years, and until their successors are appointed.

ARTICLE VI. — The Council shall have charge, during the intervals of the biennial sessions, of all business having reference to the interests of the Conference, and intrusted to it by that body, which is hereby declared a purely advisory one.

ARTICLE VII. — The National Conference, until further advised by its experience, adopts the existing organizations of the Unitarian body as the instruments of its power, and confines itself to recommending them to such undertakings and methods as it judges to be in the heart of the Unitarian denomination.

ARTICLE VIII. — This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Conference, by a vote of not less than two-thirds of the delegates accredited thereto.

ARTICLE IX. — Re-affirming our allegiance to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and desiring to secure the largest unity of the spirit, and the widest practical co-operation, we invite to our fellowship all who wish to be followers of Christ.

#### BY-LAWS.

1. Three months at least before the time fixed by the National Conference for its Biennial Meeting, the Council shall issue a circular letter of call to the churches and organizations in its fellowship, accompanying it with a form of certificate, the production of which shall be the proof of membership of the Conference until others are elected, unless otherwise ordered by the Conference.

2. The General Secretary shall keep a full report of the proceedings of the body, which shall be published at the expense of the Conference, and a copy sent to every delegate.

3. The Council at the conclusion of each Conference shall issue an address to the churches and organizations in our body,

whether members of this Conference or not, to be published with the proceedings of the Conference, containing such advice and encouragement as it may deem appropriate, but especially communicating to the churches and organizations the recommendations of the Conference in regard to plans and methods of work; the amount of money required for the uses of the year; the special objects to which they would advise its appropriation, with such suggestions as to a just apportionment of the burden as they may judge expedient and becoming.

4. The Council shall have it for its duty to keep itself accurately informed of the plans and operations of the various organizations in our Body, and of the state of the individual churches; inviting correspondence and soliciting reports, to be sent in one month before the Biennial Meeting, in which the general condition of the parish, its Sunday-school, charities, and general working, may be set forth, to the end that the Conference may know what the wants and the wishes of the churches are, somewhat more particularly than it is possible to learn in the necessary hurry of the Biennial Meeting.

5. The General Secretary of the National Conference shall be the person to whom all letters and communications shall be addressed; and he shall be, *ex officio*, a member of the Council, and constitute its Secretary.

6. The list of delegates, churches, and organizations, represented in each Conference, shall be part of the Biennial Report. The archives of the Conference shall be in the keeping of the General Secretary, subject to inspection and temporary possession by the Council.

7. A collection shall be taken up among the delegates at each Conference, to which any others may contribute, to defray the incidental expenses of the Conference, such as printing the Report, etc.

8. Each church in this Conference is recommended to defray the expenses of its delegates.



## LIST OF ACCREDITED DELEGATES.

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### MAINE.

ELLSWORTH. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. Wm. H. Savary, John D. Hopkins, Mrs. John D. Hopkins.

FARMINGTON. — Liberal Christian Association.

Rev. Chas. A. Hayden.

KENNEBUNK. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. C. C. Vinal, E. E. Bourne, William Lord.

PORTLAND. — First Parish.

Rev. Benj. H. Bailey, Mark P. Emery, Lewis Pierce.

PORTLAND. — Second Unitarian Parish.

Rev. Chas. W. Buek, George F. Talbot, Mrs. S. E. Spring.

PORTLAND. — Preble Chapel.

Rev. W. T. Phelan.

SACO. — Second Parish.

Rev. J. T. G. Nichols, C. M. Nichols.

### NEW HAMPSHIRE.

CONCORD. — Second Congregational Society.

Rev. J. F. Lovering, George A. Blanchard, Mrs. F. A. Blanchard.

DOVER. — First Unitarian Society of Christians.

Rev. Thomas W. Brown, Benjamin Barnes, Joseph L. Jackson.

EAST WILTON. — Liberal Christian Church.

Rev. A. M. Pendleton, George O. Whiting, Mrs. George O. Whiting.

EXETER. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. Edward Crowninshield.

KEENE. — Keene Congregational Society.

Rev. Wm. O. White, George Tilden.

## LACONIA. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. Courtland Y. De Normandie, W. F. Knight, John C. Moulton.

## MANCHESTER. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. C. B. Ferry, D. B. Varney, Joseph Ferren.

## PETERBORO'. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Isaac F. Porter, Mr. John Wilder, Mrs. John Wilder.

## PORTSMOUTH. — South Parish.

Rev. James De Normandie, James F. Shores, Joseph A. Grace.

## WALPOLE. — Walpole Town Congregational Society.

Rev. George Dexter, Rev. Russel N. Bellows.

## WILTON. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. I. S. Lincoln, George Parkhurst, Mrs. I. S. Lincoln.

## VERMONT.

## BRATTLEBORO'. — Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. Addison Brown, J. N. Ballister.

## BURLINGTON. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. L. G. Ware, Joel H. Gates, Wm. R. Vilas.

## CASTLETON. — First Liberal Christian Church and Society.

Rev. W. T. Ross, Rev. A. N. Adams, Mrs. A. N. Adams.

## MONTPELIER. — Church of the Messiah.

Rev. J. Edward Wright, James G. French, H. S. Loomis.

## RUTLAND. — First Liberal Christian Society.

Rev. L. W. Brigham, Loring Atwood, Newman Weeks.

## MASSACHUSETTS.

## ARLINGTON. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. George W. Cutter, William F. Homer, George F. Wellington.

## ASHBY. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. George S. Shaw, Samuel R. Damon, Mrs. Mary E. Shaw.

## ATHOL. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. W. S. Burton, Mr. Charles Field, Mrs. Charles Field.

BARNSTABLE. — Congregational Society in East Precinct.  
Rev. H. F. Edes, S. B. Phinney, Nathan Edson.

BARRE. — First Parish.  
Rev. H. R. Smith, Chaunev Loring, Dr. Wm. L. Russell.

BEVERLY. — First Parish.  
Rev. John C. Kimball, E. Foster Stone, Miss M. T. Weld.

BILLERICA. — First Congregational Society.  
Rev. C. C. Hussey, Dudley Foster, Thomas Talbot.

BOSTON. — Church in Brattle Square.  
Rev. S. K. Lothrop, D. D., J. Tisdale Bradlee, Samuel Smith.

BOSTON. — Arlington Street Church.  
Rev. Samuel B. Cruft, Charles H. Burrage.

BOSTON. — Church of the Disciples.  
Rev. Jas. Freeman Clarke, D. D., William F. Weld, Julia Ward Howe.

BOSTON. — South Congregational Church.  
Rev. Edward E. Hale, Henry P. Kidder, Leonard A. Jones.

BOSTON. — Church in Hollis Street.  
Rev. George L. Chaney, Freeman Cobb, B. W. Taggard.

BOSTON. — Church of the Unity.  
Rev. M. K. Schermerhorn, Dr. G. H. Nichols, C. E. Thayer.

BOSTON. — Church of the Good Samaritan.  
Rev. John Williams, David Owen.

BOSTON. — New South Free Church.  
Rev. W. P. Tilden, H. C. Whitcomb, Jacob Edson.

BOSTON. — Hanover Street Chapel.  
Rev. E. J. Gerry, George S. Pike, George Gould.

BOSTON. — Warren Street Chapel.  
Rev. Wm. G. Babcock, George W. Patten, E. R. Butler.

BOSTON HIGHLANDS. — First Religious Society.  
Rev. George Putnam, D. D., Rev. Adams Ayer, William Crosby.

BOSTON HIGHLANDS. — Mt. Pleasant Church.  
Theodore H. Bell, William H. Varney.

BOSTON, SOUTH. — Hawes Place Congregational Society.  
Rev. George A. Thayer, Sumner Crosby, George E. Alden.

BOSTON, DORCHESTER DISTRICT. — First Parish.  
Rev. Nathaniel Hall, Alexander Beal, Richard C. Humphrey.

BOSTON, DORCHESTER DISTRICT. — Third Unitarian Society.  
Rev. H. C. Badger.

BOSTON, DORCHESTER DISTRICT. — Third Religious Society.  
Rev. Thomas J. Mumford, Nath'l F. Safford, George C. Gorham.

BOSTON, DORCHESTER DISTRICT. — Church of the Unity.  
Rev. H. D. Catlin, Charles H. Codman, Jonathan Butterfield.

BRIDGEWATER. — First Congregational Society.  
Rev. George H. Hosmer, Lloyd Parsons, Mitchell Hooper.

BRIGHTON. — First Parish.  
Rev. Thomas Timmins, Bela S. Fiske, William W. Warren.

BROOKFIELD. — First Congregational Church.  
Rev. A. J. Rieh, E. Twichell, H. L. Mellen.

BROOKLINE. — First Parish.  
Rev. F. H. Hedge, D. D., Henry V. Poor, Francis P. Denny.

BROOKLINE. — Chestnut Hill Church.  
Rev. A. B. Muzzey, Leverett Saltonstall, Theodore Lyman.

CAMBRIDGE. — First Parish.  
James D. Green, Joseph R. Richards.

CAMBRIDGEPORT. — Cambridgeport Parish.  
Rev. George W. Briggs, D. D., Isaae Livermore, Dr. Wm. W. Wellington.

CANTON. — First Congregational Parish.  
Rev. George F. Piper, Charles H. French, Frederie Endicott.

CARLISLE. — First Religious Society.  
Rev. J. S. Smith, Nathan Buttrick, Maj. B. F. Heald.

CHARLESTOWN. — Harvard Church Society.  
Rev. Charles E. Grinnell, Edwin F. Adams, Thomas M. Devens.

CHELMSFORD. — First Congregational Society.  
Rev. F. W. Webber, Dr. J. C. Bartlett, J. Adams Bartlett.

## CHELSEA. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. J. B. Green, Samuel Orcutt, Mrs. Sarah L. A. White.

## CHICOPEE. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. George A. Denison, Thomas A. Denison.

## CLINTON. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. J. F. Waterhouse, Franklin Forbes, William Stearns.

## COHASSET. — First Parish.

Rev. Joseph Osgood, Levi Tower.

## CONCORD. — First Parish.

Rev. Grindall Reynolds, Rev. N. S. Folsom, John Brown, jr.

## DANVERS. — Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. L. J. Livermore, P. H. Wentworth, Mrs. L. J. Livermore.

## DEDHAM. — First Parish.

Rev. George M. Folsom, Jonathan Cobb, Mrs. E. G. Foord.

## DEERFIELD. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. E. Buckingham, George Wright, Richard P. Jenks.

## DIGHTON. — Pede-Baptist Congregational Society.

Rev. F. E. Kittredge, Mrs. A. L. Kittredge, Mrs. Betsey P. Swasey.

## DOVER. — First Parish.

Rev. C. S. Locke, Theodore Dunn.

## EAST BRIDGEWATER. — East Church.

S. S. Strong, James H. Mitchell.

## EAST CAMBRIDGE. — Third Congregational Society.

Rev. Samuel W. McDaniel, Mrs. S. W. McDaniel, John Palmer.

## EAST MARSHFIELD. — Second Congregational Society.

Rev. Wm. H. Fish, George H. Weatherbee, jr., Mrs. George H. Weatherbee, jr.

## FAIRHAVEN. — Washington Street Christian Church.

Rev. E. C. Butler, Charles Taber, Mrs. Laura Taber.

## FALL RIVER. — Unitarian Society.

Rev. Joshua Young, Guildford H. Hathaway, Dr. Foster Hooper.

## FITCHBURG. — First Parish.

Charles Fessenden, James F. Stiles.



## FRAMINGHAM. — First Parish.

Rev. H. G. Spaulding, George Richardson, Wm. H. Mellen.

## GLOUCESTER. — First Parish.

Rev. Minot G. Gage, James Mansfield, Mrs. Sarah D. Bickford.

## GRAFTON. — Congregational Society.

Rev. Wm. G. Scandlin, John M. Davenport, Charles Brigham.

## GRANTVILLE. — Unitarian Society.

Miss R. Eaton, Miss E. Eaton.

## GREENFIELD. — Third Congregational Church.

Rev. J. F. Moors, Theodore Leonard, William A. Gile.

## GROTON. — First Parish.

Rev. H. D. Dix, William Livermore.

## HAVERHILL. — First Parish.

Rev. Wm. H. Spencer, Mrs. S. P. Bradley, John A. Appleton.

## HINGHAM. — First Parish.

Rev. Calvin Lincoln, Henry Siders, E. Waters Burr.

## HINGHAM. — Third Congregation.

Rev. John Snyder.

## HYDE PARK. — Second Congregational Society.

Rev. Francis C. Williams, E. C. Aldrich.

## IPSWICH. — Liberal Christian Society.

Rev. Lemuel K. Washburne, James Damon, F. Homer Foster.

## JAMAICA PLAIN. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. James W. Thompson, D. D., S. R. Spaulding, E. D. Winslow.

## KINGSTON. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Joseph H. Phipps, Mrs. Laura M. Phipps, Joseph A. Holmes.

## LANCASTER. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. George M. Bartol, Rev. John J. Putnam, G. Frederic Chandler.

## LAWRENCE. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. James B. Moore, Joseph Shattuck, jr., Charles Clarke.

LEICESTER. — Second Congregational Society.

Rev. David H. Montgomery, Rev. Samuel May, Henry O. Smith.

LEOMINSTER. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Edward A. Horton, Mr. Manson D. Haws, Mrs. Manson D. Haws.

LEXINGTON. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. Henry Westcott, Hammon Reed, Warren Duren.

LITTLETON. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. David P. Muzzey, Gardner Prouty, Peter S. Whitcomb.

LOWELL. — First Unitarian Society.

John F. Kimball, E. B. Patch.

LYNN. — Second Congregational Church.

Rev. S. B. Stewart, George W. Keene, Amos P. Tapley.

LYNNFIELD. — First Congregational Society.

Hubbard Emerson, Mrs. Caroline H. Dall.

MARBLEHEAD. — Second Congregational Society.

Rev. W. B. Buxton, S. P. Hathaway, Mrs. S. P. Hathaway.

MARLBORO'. — West Parish.

Rev. Calvin Stebbins, S. H. Howe, John Frye.

MEDFIELD. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. J. H. Wiggin, Rev. C. C. Sewall, Dr. J. H. Richardson.

MEDFORD. — First Parish.

Rev. H. C. De Long, James W. Tufts, Alice Ayres.

MELROSE. — Congregational Unitarian Society.

Mr. Charles Tappan, Mrs. Charles Tappan.

MILTON. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. John H. Morison, D. D., Robert S. Morison.

NATICK. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. Horatio Alger, Elliot Perry, Mrs. Thomas B. Gannett.

NEEDHAM. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. A. B. Vorse.

NEW BEDFORD. — First Congregational Society.

William Rotch, John A. Hawes.

NEWBURYPORT. — First Religious Society.

Rev. Joseph May, Henry Kingsbury, Mrs. Joseph May.

NEWTON. — Channing Religious Society.

Rev. Eli Fay, Henry Claflin, S. G. Simpkins.

NORTHAMPTON. — Second Congregational Church.

Ansel Wright, jr., E. A. Ramsey.

NORTH ANDOVER. — North Parish Church and Society.

Isaac F. Osgood, Miss Hannah A. Kittredge.

NORTHBORO'. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. Joseph Allen, D. D., Rev. F. L. Hosmer, Mrs. Cyrus Gale,  
Henry G. Colburn.

NORTHFIELD. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. Charles Noyes, E. E. Belding, A. C. Parsons.

PEABODY. — First Unitarian Church.

Rev. E. I. Galvin, Mrs. Eliza Sutton, William N. Lord.

PEMBROKE. — First Parish.

Rev. T. P. Doggett, George B. Standish, Seth Whitman.

PEPPERELL. — First Parish.

Rev. Charles Babbidge, C. W. Bellows, S. P. Lewis.

PETERSHAM. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Thomas D. Howard, John M. Holman, S. A. Chamberlin.

PLYMOUTH. — First Parish.

Thomas H. Russell.

QUINCY. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. John D. Wells, Francis Williams, Edward H. Dewson.

READING. — Christian Union Society.

Rev. E. B. Fairchild, F. H. Knight, H. Prentiss.

ROWE. — Congregational Society.

Rev. W. M. Bicknell, L. M. Bicknell.

SALEM. — First Church.

Rev. James T. Hewes, Thomas Nichols, Wm. H. Burbeck.

SALEM. — Second Church.

Rev. S. C. Beane, Joseph Peabody, David Lingree.

SALEM. — Independent Congregational Church in Barton Square.  
Rev. George Batchelor, Aaron Perkins, Richard Harrington.

SALEM. — North Society.

Rev. Edmund B. Willson, Solomon Lincoln, jr., Geo. Wheatland.

SANDWICH. — First Church of Christ.

Rev. S. B. Flagg, John W. Pope, Frederic S. Pope.

SCITUATE. — First Parish.

Rev. H. L. Cargill.

SHELBORN. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. William Brown, James H. Leland.

SHIRLEY. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. Seth Chandler, E. D. Bancroft, Mrs. E. D. Bancroft.

SOMERVILLE. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. H. H. Barber, F. H. Raymond, Andrew C. Spring.

SOUTH HINGHAM. — Second Parish.

Rev. A. G. Jennings.

SOUTH SCITUATE. — First Parish.

Rev. W. H. Fish, E. T. Fogg, Miss Levina A. Hatch.

SPRINGFIELD. — Third Congregational Society.

Rev. Charles A. Humphreys, J. A. Rumrill, Homer Foot.

STERLING. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. H. C. Bates, Perley Bartlett, Joseph Whitney.

STONEHAM. — Christian Union Church.

Rev. E. B. Fairchild, Rev. J. L. Hatch, Mrs. Mariah H. Fairchild.

STURBRIDGE. — Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. Charles T. Irish, Bowers Chase, Emory Bates.

SWAMPSCOTT. — First Unitarian Church.

Rev. John F. W. Ware, Henry L. Daggett, Charles G. Wood.

TAUNTON. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Fielder Israel, Lebaron B. Church, Billings T. Presbrey.

UPTON. — Unitarian Society.

Rev. George S. Ball, William Knowlton, Joseph Partridge.

## UNBRIDGE. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Samuel R. Priest, Charles A. Wheelock, Francis Deane.

## WALPOLE. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. W. B. Smith, Edmund W. Clap, Jerome B. Cram.

## WALTHAM. — First Parish.

Rev. Clay McCauley, Rev. Thomas Hill, D. D., George A. Stearns.

## WARE. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. George A. Denison, Charles A. Stevens, Mrs. Charles A. Stevens.

## WARWICK. — First Parish.

Rev. W. A. P. Willard, Rev. James L. Hatch.

## WATERTOWN. — First Parish.

Rev. James T. Bixby, Wm. H. Ingraham, John E. Bradlee.

## WEST BRIDGEWATER. — First Congregational Society.

Benjamin Howard, F. E. Howard.

## WEST DEDHAM. — Third Parish.

Rev. Elisha Gifford, Erastus E. Gay, Charles French.

## WESTBORO'. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Wm. G. Todd, B. B. Nourse, S. S. Turner.

## WESTFORD. — First Congregational Parish.

Rev. George H. Young, Mr. Franklin A. Fletcher, Mrs. Franklin A. Fletcher.

## WESTON. — First Parish.

Rev. E. H. Sears, Dr. Edw. Warren, Oliver R. Robbins.

## WINCHENDON. — Church of the Unity.

Rev. C. H. Wheeler, I. M. Murdock, A. A. Ballou.

## WINCHESTER. — Unitarian Society.

Rev. Richard Metcalf, S. W. Twombly, E. M. Metcalf.

## WOBBURN. — First Unitarian Parish.

Rev. W. S. Barnes, J. B. Winn, Charles Choate.

## WORCESTER. — Church of the Unity.

Rev. R. R. Shippen, Dr. M. Bemis, E. D. Thayer.

## WORCESTER. — Second Congregational Church.

Rev. E. H. Hall, Lewis Barnard, Samuel S. Green.



## RHODE ISLAND.

NEWPORT. — Unitarian Congregation.

Rev. Charles T. Brooks, William A. Clarke, Samuel C. Bailey.

PROVIDENCE. — First Congregational Society.

Rev. Arthur M. Knapp, Josiah Whitaker, Mrs. Geo. Richmond.

PROVIDENCE. — Westminster Congregational Society.

Rev. A. Woodbury, Seth Padelford, George B. Calder.

PROVIDENCE. — Church of the Ministry at Large.

Rev. Edwin M. Stone, William B. Healy, Henry S. Stone.

## CONNECTICUT.

HARTFORD. — First Unitarian Congregational Society.

Horace Cornwall, David Clark.

## NEW YORK.

BROOKLYN. — First Congregational Unitarian Church.

Rev. A. P. Putnam, Luther B. Wyman, Ripley Ropes.

BROOKLYN. — Second Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. John W. Chadwick, Ethelbert S. Mills, James H. Frothingham.

BROOKLYN. — Third Unitarian Church.

Rev. Stephen H. Camp, Edward Cromwell, Robert Foster.

BUFFALO. — First Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. Frederick Frothingham, Noel P. Sprague, Henry M. Kent.

ILION. — Liberal Christian Church.

Rev. H. M. Simmons, Mrs. H. M. Simmons, John Islam.

NEWBURGH. — Church of Our Father.

John P. De Wint, John Heron.

NEW YORK. — First Congregational Church.

Rev. Henry W. Bellows, D. D., William C. Bryant, Salem T. Russell.

NEW YORK. — Church of the Messiah.

Rev. George H. Hepworth, Richard Warren, Dexter A. Hawkins.

## NEW YORK. — Fourth Unitarian Society.

Rev. W. T. Clarke, Thomas Wilson, Edward A. Price.

## ROCHESTER. — First Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. N. M. Mann, James L. Angle, Joseph Curtis.

## SYRACUSE. — Unitarian Congregational Church.

Rev. S. R. Calthrop, Dr. Lyman Clary, Horatio N. White.

## TRENTON. — Reformed Christian Church.

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## TROY. — First Unitarian Society.

Albert E. Powers, Robert Green.

## VERNON. — Unitarian Congregational Society.

Rev. W. P. Payne, Joel H. Hills, Everett Case.

## YONKERS. — First Unitarian Congregational Church.

Rev. Rushton D. Burr, John E. Williams, David R. Jaques.

## NEW JERSEY.

## BRICKSBURG. — Liberal Christian Society.

Rev. J. B. Beach, Benjamin Snyder, Charles G. French.

## MONTCLAIR. — Liberal Christian Society.

Rev. J. B. Harrison, I. W. Weidemeyer.

## VINELAND. — First Congregational Unitarian Society.

Rev. Oscar Clute, George Scarborough, D. F. Morrill.

## PENNSYLVANIA.

## GERMANTOWN. — Unitarian Society.

Rev. Silas Farrington, E. W. Clark, J. P. Ilsley.

## MEADVILLE. — First Independent Congregational Church.

Rev. H. P. Cutting, James Bates, Joseph Shippen.

## NORTHUMBERLAND. — Unitarian Church and Society.

Rev. D. H. Clark, Mrs. D. H. Clark.

## DELAWARE.

## WILMINGTON. — First Unitarian Society.

Henry Lea, W. B. Butler.

## MARYLAND.

BALTIMORE. — First Independent Church.  
 Rev. Edward C. Guild, Enoch Pratt, George B. Cole.

BALTIMORE. — Church of the Saviour.  
 Rev. John F. W. Ware, Thomas Whitridge, J. T. Graham.

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WASHINGTON. — First Unitarian Church.  
 Rev. Frederic Hinckley, George E. Baker, Henry A. Willard.

WASHINGTON. — Free National Church of Christ.  
 F. S. Nichols, Mrs. Caroline B. Winslow.

## OHIO.

CINCINNATI. — Church of the Redeemer.  
 Rev. A. D. Mayo, Robert Hever, Luther F. Potter.

CINCINNATI. — First Congregational Church.  
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CLEVELAND. — Church of the Unity.  
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## KENTUCKY.

LOUISVILLE. — Church of the Messiah.  
 Rev. J. H. Heywood, A. G. Munn.

## ILLINOIS.

BLOOMINGTON. — Free Congregational Church.  
 Kersey H. Fell, Dr. Z. Waters.

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CHICAGO. — First Unitarian Church.  
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Rev. J. L. Jones, Artemas Carter, James L. Willson.

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William Leighton.

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Rev. S. H. Taft, J. M. Snyder.

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SHEBOYGAN. — Unity Church.

Rev. M. G. Kimball, H. M. Ross.

## MICHIGAN.

ANN ARBOR. — First Unitarian Society.

Rev. Charles H. Brigham, W. D. Harriman, T. S. Sanford.

DETROIT. — First Congregational Unitarian Society.

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Rev. R. P. Cutler, Joseph Walker.

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